

---

This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google<sup>TM</sup> books

<https://books.google.com>







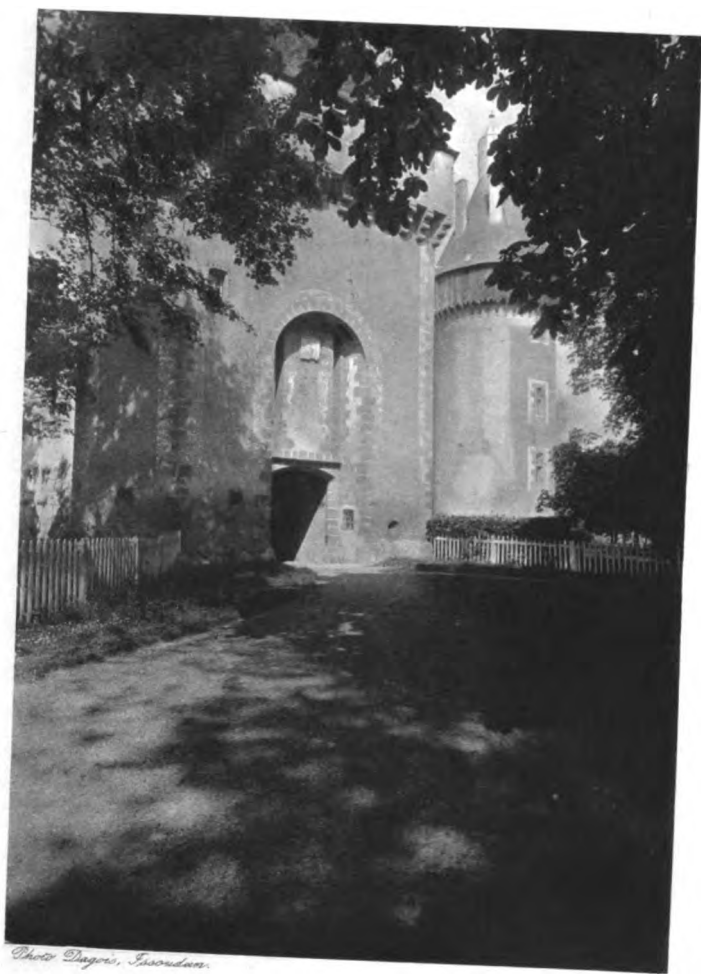
# **THE DERELICT DUCHESS**

**A Study of the Life and Times of Charlotte D'Albret  
Duchesse de Valentinois**

**WIFE OF CESARE BORGIA**







*Photo Daguer, Issoudun.*

*The Château of La Motte-Feuilly.*

# THE CHESS

THE TIMES OF  
THE GREAT  
FRENCH  
REPUBLIC

IRON

THE TIMES OF THE  
FRENCH REPUBLIC

THE TIMES OF THE  
FRENCH REPUBLIC

NO  
BRENN



# THE DERELICT DUCHESS

A STUDY OF THE LIFE AND TIMES OF  
CHARLOTTE D'ALBRET  
DUCHESS DE VALENTINOIS  
WIFE OF CESARE BORGIA

BY  
E. L. MIRON

"Jamaïs plus de vertus ne furent mises en contact avec plus de vices."  
PAOLO GIOVIO

WITH A PHOTOGRAVURE FRONTISPIECE  
AND NINETEEN OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

New York  
BRENTANO'S  
1912

92  
V235m

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN



TO  
IZA DUFFUS HARDY  
AND  
EDITH M. THOMAS  
FRIENDS—AND MINE



## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

WITH the exception of Miss Elizabeth Champneys, who has devoted a chapter, wherein fact and fancy are deftly blended, in her "Châteaux of the Renaissance," to Charlotte d'Albret, I know of no other writer in English who has given more than a passing allusion to the wife of Cesare Borgia. Even the numerous French, Italian, and German writers to whose exhaustive researches I owe all that may disarm criticism in the pages which follow, bestow, for the most part, merely, here, a passing glance of pity, there, an expression of the homage which virtue that missed happiness never fails to command, on the subject of this memoir.

M. Edmond Bonnaffé alone, in his matchless monograph on the "Inventaire" of the Duchesse de Valentinois, gives her name the honour which it surely deserves in those pages whereon he lifts for us, with as much pathos as precision, the veil which shrouds her story. And at the last of it we shall find yet another French writer, M. Edmond Planchut, allotting to her memory, in the pages of *Le Temps*, that meed which is her due. Faint outlines from the rest are, perhaps, after all, excusable. For Charlotte d'Albret is of those minor persons of the drama with whom crowd and critic alike have but slight concern.

Incident in abundance went forward, it is true,

around her. Deeds of daring and deception unfolded themselves about her very cradle. Dice of policies were cast along the current of her childhood. She had no part in the toils wherein she was eventually to be caught. Rôle she had none, save as a pawn on the chessboard of King and Pope ; and the master-makers of history, held spellbound and enthralled by that play of policy and perfidy which marks the French alliance with the Borgia Pope, have caught the infection of the Borgia methods, and brushed aside, as one might the moth that hovers in the lamplight, the slight story of this delicate and gracious flower of France. "As though," writes M. Planchut, standing, on reverent pilgrimage, before her mutilated marble presentment at La Motte Feuilly, "the narrative of a pure and simple life, of a sacrifice religiously accomplished, were less worthy of being transmitted to posterity than the villainies of a Borgia !"

And to me, also, it seems that, although of all griefs ever borne by woman, hers, surely, was one wherewith no stranger, even now, may lightly intermeddle, yet her story merits a place beside that of her friend, Jeanne La Boiteuse, as "one of the saddest little stories in French history." As such, therefore, I have ventured to tell it. So slight a story ! So slight a figure ! How shall that story be told at all ? For the short, shadowed record is, for the most part, in the keeping of silent things : the stones of Nérac, Casteljaloux, Chinon, Blois, Issoudun, Romorantin, Bourges, and La Motte Feuilly ; the marble of her effigy that has outlived mutilation ; and the inventory of her princely personal possessions. Who shall compel these trusty custodians to yield up the secrets they have guarded

for well-nigh six centuries ? And if the yielding come to pass, how small is the sum of the thing surrendered !

The wife of Cesare Borgia, shedding a lustre of which it was utterly unworthy on the ignoble name that was thrust upon her, moves, serenely simple, a shadowy yet arresting figure, on the threshold of the dawn of the Renaissance. Those glowing wings were already preening themselves for flight towards France ; but the quality of their contact with her life was destined to be but the brutal grip of the condottieri. She who knew how to suffer a wrong most undeserved with the majestic calm of a perfect resignation, may seem at first sight a poor and pallid portrait in the gallery illumined by the lurid lightnings of the chronicles of the House of Borgia.

Yet, to turn from the base and bloodstained annals of that House to the contemplation and acquaintance of Charlotte d'Albret, is surely to pass from the hideous carnage of Capua, the lascivious buffooneries of the Rome of Alexander VI., into the sweet peace of the countryside of her own castellany of La Motte Feuilly. So it may chance that even in this restless, surface-seeking twentieth century, when the hoards of the world's archives are giving up, almost hour by hour, clue and correction of much that has hitherto passed for history, there may be some for whom the quiet byways of "the life of man, which is the true romance," still keep their inalienable charm ; some who will gladly turn aside with me from the highway thronged with better-known and more imperial figures, to track this Princess of Pity through the mazes of her faintly outlined story ; to add, it may be, having read that story to its close, one more unfading leaf to the

stainless coronal that binds the wistful brows of our Duchess Derelict.

One thought before our journey begins. History, that has concerned itself so little with the woman whom Cesare Borgia married, has known, nevertheless, how to spare her a crowning indignity. It knows her not as Carlotta Borgia. That name was the right, had strict truth joined hands with strict justice, of Vanozza of the Vineyard. But to us, remembering how the Renaissance, which brought to France so much that was splendid, brought to Vanozza's daughter-in-law the burden only of a most bitter dereliction, the shame—which yet left her pure soul unsmirched—of having been the bride of a Borgia, the mother of his child, it seems most fitting that she should be recalled as Charlotte of the noble House of d'Albret.

There remains a word of acknowledgment from me of the debt I owe to those who have reaped to such splendid purpose before me in the field where I have been but a humble gleaner. Without their patient researches, their critical yet sympathetic investigation of otherwise inaccessible sources of information, my own lighter task would have been impossible. It is, therefore, with profound gratitude, and with the homage of a disciple laid at the feet of his masters, that I inscribe this recognition of my indebtedness to those, the living and the dead, whose works I have consulted for the purposes of this book.

I am more particularly obliged, for invaluable and courteous assistance, ungrudgingly given, to the following, whom I ask to accept my most sincere and grateful thanks: Madame Fillonneau, Miss M. E. Tanner, Mr. St. Clair Baddeley, Mr. G. F. Hill, M. Dumayez, M. Henri Moindrot, the Editor of

*Le Temps*, the Sub-Prefect of Romorantin, the Sub-Prefect of Nérac, Mr. Owen John Llewellyn (for a photo of Nérac), Mr. Edward Hudson of *Country Life* (for photos of Blois and Chinon); and last, but by no means least, the officials and attendants of the Reading Room of the British Museum for their unfailing courtesy and attention.

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

### THE CHÂTEAU OF LA MOTTE FEUILLY . *Photogravure Frontispiece*

	PAGE
NÉRAC . . . . .	33
From a photograph by Owen John Llewellyn.	
THE CHÂTEAU OF NÉRAC . . . . .	51
From a photograph by B. Tuja, Nérac.	
THE CHÂTEAU OF CHINON . . . . .	69
From <i>Country Life</i> , by kind permission of the proprietors.	
THE CHÂTEAU OF BLOIS . . . . .	87
From <i>Country Life</i> , by kind permission of the proprietors.	
THE CHÂTEAU OF ROMORANTIN (NOW THE SUB-PRÉFECTURE) .	105
From a photograph by Henri Moindrot, Romorantin.	
ANNE OF BRITTANY . . . . .	123
By kind permission of the authorities of the British Museum.	
REPUTED PORTRAIT OF CESARE BOGGIA . . . . .	123
By kind permission of the authorities of the British Museum.	
CAESAR BOGGIA: MEDALLION PORTRAIT . . . . .	141
A LETTER—BOGGIA ARMS AND WAFER SEAL . . . . .	159, 160
From an MS. in the British Museum.	
GEORGES D'AMBOISE . . . . .	177
JEANNE DE FRANCE: MEDALLION PORTRAIT . . . . .	195
THE TOUR BLANCHE . . . . .	213
From a photograph by Dagols, Issoudun.	
GATEWAY OF THE CONVENT OF THE ANNONCIADES, BOURGES .	231
DOOR OF THE CHAPEL OF THE ANNONCIADES, BOURGES .	249
SIDE VIEW OF THE CHANCEL OF THE CHAPEL OF THE ANNONCIADES, BOURGES . . . . .	267
END VIEW OF THE CHAPEL OF THE ANNONCIADES, BOURGES .	285
THE CHURCH OF LA MOTTE FEUILLY . . . . .	303
From a photograph by Dagols, Issoudun.	
THE TOMB OF CHARLOTTE D'ALBERT . . . . .	303
From a photograph by Dagols, Issoudun.	
THE OLD YEW AT LA MOTTE FEUILLY . . . . .	321
From a photograph by Dagols, Issoudun.	

## CONTENTS

### CHAPTER I

The House of d'Albret—Origin of the name—The cradle of their race—Labrit in the journey-book of a sixteenth-century traveller—The doorway in the sand—Heroes of the House—The era of Alain le Grand—The making of his marriage . . . pp. 17-26

### CHAPTER II

The birthplace of Charlotte—The Château of Nérac—The state of the feudal family—A glimpse of the nursery at Nérac—The chrism-cloths—The day's round at Nérac—A page of costume of the period . . . . . pp. 27-37

### CHAPTER III

Death of Madame d'Albret—Her place of burial—The Saint-Denis of the House of d'Albret—Alain as litigant—The captive of Casteljaloux—Wars and rumours of wars—Alain and the little Duchess—A child's antipathy—Plots and counter-plots—The statesmanship of Anne de Beaujeu—The rejected suitor—His revenge—The evil genius of Bretagne—"Mesdemoiselles" as regents—Marriage of the little Duchess—Joy at Rennes pp. 38-49

### CHAPTER IV

Girl-gossips at Nérac—The romance of Françoise de Dinan, Dame de Châteaubriant—The passing of little Madame Isabeau de Bretagne—Her funeral honours—Charlotte goes to court—"A nursery for queens" . . . . . pp. 50-63

### CHAPTER V

A Prince of the Church—The bribed Conclave—Rome welcomes the new Pope—Vanozza of the Vineyard—Cesare Borgia, Cardinal, who may be Prince—The shaping of the shadow that was to fall on Charlotte d'Albret and her dreams—A campaign of compliments—Raimondo Centelles—The Sire d'Albret much in doubt . . . . . pp. 64-74

## CHAPTER VI

The household of Anne de Bretagne—Some of her ladies—Their duties—The Queen's wardrobe—Her love of scents—Her bath—Her capricious love of clothes—Her furs—Her dealings with her ladies and her disposal of their future—"La grande marieuse"—Patroness of art, music, and the dance—Her Order of chivalry—The other Charlotte—Death of Charles VIII. . . . pp. 75-89

## CHAPTER VII

"The little dark, deformed Queen of France"—Her sacring delayed—The Sire d'Albret to the fore—Royal favours—The Queen-Duchess keeps her court at Étampes—A sober pageant—Preparations in Italy for the departure of the Pope's "dear son" . . . pp. 90-99

## CHAPTER VIII

The shadow deepens on Charlotte's path—Avignon *en fête*—Gifts for the Lord Duke . . . . . pp. 100-112

## CHAPTER IX

Pageant and pillory—The Duchesse de Berry—Louis gives a saint to France—Cesare comes to Chinon—Scorn of the Princesse de Tarente—The King of France rides post-haste to Nantes—A twice-crowned Queen . . . . . pp. 113-128

## CHAPTER X

The Duc de Valentinois in the sulks—Threatened Spanish alliance—Another Charlotte is proposed as his bride—A lily in the shade—Scruples and statecraft—Jean Calvimont and Simon de la Romagière—A delicate question—The Sire d'Albret bargains—He yields—The contract signed . . . . . pp. 127-148

## CHAPTER XI

Marriage of Cesare and Charlotte at Blois—Brides in ancient France—Royal fêtes—Charlotte's dowry—What she brought to her husband—Portraits of the bridegroom—Cesare as Charlotte saw him . . . . . pp. 149-158

## CHAPTER XII

The bride's letter to her father-in-law—The Borgia smile—Bonfires and congratulations—Cesare, son of France and knight of St. Michael—The Duke must "live well"—The students of Paris play a farce—Brief days at Blois . . . . . pp. 161-168

## CHAPTER XIII

Lord and Lady of Issoudun—Romorantin of the Angoulêmes—Farewell for ever—Heart beyond the Alps—The Golden Rose pp. 169-182

CHAPTER XIV

The other Charlotte—The Double Crown—Borjas of Jativa—The lost cipher—The after-history of Charlotte of Naples—How her father paid the price of her scorn . . . pp. 183-191

CHAPTER XV

While Charlotte grieved—Her child for compensation—The Pope's wish—A captive cousin—Sweets from Cesare . . pp. 192-204

CHAPTER XVI

A royal house-party—Blois of the days of Louis XII.—The Duchesse de Valentinois as a carrier of comfits—The era of the drageoir . . pp. 205-215

CHAPTER XVII

"The hope of unaccomplished years"—Cesare has other dreams—The châtelaine of the Tour Blanche—Issoudun of the days of Charlotte d'Albret—Eternal gratitude of the Borgias towards Anne de Bretagne—Her fruitless efforts to recall Charlotte to court—The Duchesse de Valentinois at the second coronation of her "cousin"—A pageant of fair women . . pp. 216-225

CHAPTER XVIII

The manor of La Motte Feuilly—Its lords and ladies—The Duchesse de Valentinois becomes its châtelaine—The fatal garden—The Borgia sups with death—Cesare as an invalid—His convalescence—Wild hope of reunion—The captive of Ischia—Not a home, but a hermitage . . . pp. 226-236

CHAPTER XIX

A great lady in the provinces—What Charlotte d'Albret lived for—Finding the past at home in the Château of La Motte Feuilly—Tapestries of Felletin—In Miladi's chamber—Canopies for queens—Caskets and crespines—Gowns and gauds—The pomander—The shadow of Cesare Borgia on the "Inventaire" . . pp. 237-252

CHAPTER XX

The ducal household—How Charlotte d'Albret cared for those who served her—The "Loaf-giver"—Needlework and fine linen—Pantry and plate and priest's vestments . . pp. 253-262

CHAPTER XXI

The Duchesse de Valentinois as a woman of business—Loans and letters—The unwritten page . . . pp. 263-269

## CHAPTER XXII

Charlotte d'Albret's St. Elizabeth—Their common destiny—The court of a Saint—Her holy dream—Its fulfilment—The passing of the "Good Duchess" of Berry—The fate of her tomb pp. 270-279

## CHAPTER XXIII

The refugee of Pampeluna—His "very dear wife's dowry"—A last hope—The mission of Requesenz—Wife and friend plead in vain—Louis XII. takes vengeance for the Borgia's "nasty tricks"—The ambush of Viana—A scarlet sunset . . . pp. 280-290

## CHAPTER XXIV

The news comes to La Motte Feuilly—The last dereliction—The Château in mourning—Little Louise in black serge—Viana and Bourges—The Dame de Chalus . . . pp. 291-299

## CHAPTER XXV

Death of Charlotte d'Albret—Her last will and testament—Some of its provisions—Her chosen burial-place—The tomb of her heart—How it fared with those who shaped her fate . . . pp. 300-307

## CHAPTER XXVI

Louise Borgia—Her childhood—Marriages that might have been made for her—Her mother's will in its bearing on her life—Letters to her kinsfolk—Her marriage—Louis de la Trémoille pays homage to her virtues—Her mother's child—Glimpses of her after-life—Her second marriage—Her children—The Duchy of Valentinois . . . pp. 308-327

## CHAPTER XXVII

Charlotte d'Albret's monument in the Church of La Motte Feuilly—A daughter's tribute—Its sculptor—Its fate—Its restoration—As it is to-day—A last memory . . . pp. 328-334

## APPENDIX I

The Marriage Contract between Cesare Borgia, Duc de Valentinois and de Diois, and Charlotte d'Albret, signed at the Château of Blois, May 10, 1499 . . . pp. 335-341

## APPENDIX II

The Last Will and Testament of Charlotte d'Albret, Duchesse de Valentinois . . . pp. 342-345

## APPENDIX III

Fragment of the Marriage Contract of Louise de Valentinois and Louis II. de La Trémoille, solemnised April 17, 1517 . . . p. 346

INDEX . . . pp. 347-352

# DUCHESS DERELICT

## CHAPTER I

The House of d'Albret—Origin of the name—The cradle of their race—Labrit in the journey-book of a sixteenth-century traveller—The doorway in the sand—Heroes of the House—The era of Alain le Grand—The making of his marriage.

“**THE** great and very noble House of d'Albret”—“**Domini de Lebreto**”—masters, at the close of the fifteenth century, of the valley of the Garonne, and dominating the neighbouring fiefs of the Pyrenean countryside, destined before another century closed to give a king, the gay and gallant Henri de Navarre, to the throne of which they had been feudatories, sprang, not without an overshadow of obscurity, from a little hamlet ringed round by stretches of sandy heath and pine forests in Gascony of the Landes. From the hares that gambolled on the dunes of that lonely region some will have it that both House and cradle took their name—“**Labrit, le pays des lièvres,**” writes one who knew the district. Andrea Navagero, ambassador of the Venetian Republic, travelling out of Spain into France in 1500, passed the group of forty or fifty houses—“**bourg de mil âmes**”—in 1860, clustered round the wood-embosomed “**Château of M. d'Albret**”; whilst a still later traveller reminds us that “a

gothic doorway, half buried in the sand," is all that remains of the Château.

There were heroes amongst the d'Albrets from the first. M. Samazeuilh, who may justly claim to be not only the historian of the Agénaïs, a district with which the House of d'Albret was so intimately connected, but no less of the great feudal family itself, quotes the pronouncement, true in part, in part spiteful, of an anonymous contemporary. "Commonplace folk," he calls them; "*mal apropos*, ingenious, far-seeing, always with an eye to the main chance, and setting great store by good matches; ever on the look-out for heiresses."

The women of the family, excluded by an early application of the Salic law from inheriting the honours of their House, seem to have escaped at the same time the blemish of that hereditary limp which distinguished more than one member of it, as for example Charles d'Albret, who fell at Agincourt, and the Great Alain, who was to be the father of the wife of Cesare Borgia, for we learn that it was the invariable good fortune of the Demoiselles d'Albret to become, thanks to their youth and beauty, the brides of wealthy suitors. Nor can the further reproach be flung at one at least of these same Demoiselles that she inherited that unlovely trait which is said to have been yet another blot on the d'Albret escutcheon, of "taking all, and giving nothing."

From the tenth to the twelfth century, "daring highwaymen and indefatigable plunderers," as certain writers have not scrupled to style these restless Gascons, we find them well to the fore in the stirring episodes which marked the English supremacy in Gascony and Aquitaine, now on the English side,

now on the French, selling their sword and the services of their soldiers alike to the highest bidder, vassals of our Plantagenet kings, Henry II. and Richard Cœur de Lion and Edward II. Yet, since there was good Gascon blood in the veins of these "lords of furze and heath," over and over again the House of d'Albret gave heroic men to France.

There were the frequent, recurring Amanieus of the House. Amanieu, says M. Luchaire, the able historian of the d'Albret family, was anciently a common name in Guienne and Gascony. Becoming out-of-date, it was, however, long preserved and borne by members of the family in question. There was that Amanieu (one of the long line of the name destined to grow degenerate, as a later page of this volume will show, in the person of the frivolous Cardinal d'Albret of the Borgia pontificate) who is said to have been second in Jerusalem at its capture by Godfrey de Bouillon, having followed in the wake of Gaston, Vicomte de Béarn, to the Second Crusade. It was another Amanieu who placed 1,000 lances at the service of the Black Prince; whilst a third, heartbroken at having caused the death of his friend and neighbour, the Sire de Montbéron, by accident at a tourney, sought and found, in battle against the Moors in Spain, the healing of his "grievous wound."

Bernard d'Albret merits, by his dashing exploits, the proud title of "the greatest of all the Gascon captains," Bernard-Esi coming no whit behind as seneschal of Edward III. in Aquitaine. Worthy of the living and of the dead alike was that act in which some will have Perducas d'Albret bear his part when the surrendered keys of the fortress of Châteauneuf were laid down, in chivalrous homage

to the valiant dead, on the bier of Duguesclin. And who shall say to what heroic strain in a feeble woman's body that d'Albret whose story we are to tell owed the grace of that saintly submission with which she faced the heartbreak of her doom ?

And yet, if heredity counts for anything, Charlotte d'Albret was her mother's child. We do not need to take into our hands those twin manuals of their "Inventaires," documents which, in each case, lift the veil for us with "unexceptionable fidelity," from the dead women as they lived long ago. We pass by the mere womanly points of resemblance between them, taste in dress, love of ornaments and perfumes, of sacred pictures and reliquaries, of such qualities as those of good housewifery and needlecraft, rather than of high intellectual attainments. We go back, rather, to the House from which her father won his bride, to that Guillaume de Blois, de Penthievre, de Périgord, and de Limoges, whose faithful service in his elder brother's cause earned him only a lifetime of twenty-eight years' captivity, and emergence from it, prematurely aged, enfeebled, and almost blind, to take up that brother's thorny inheritance. In the figure of that gaunt old man, the grandfather of Charlotte d'Albret, led by his servants by the hand from point to point of the territory on which he could but gaze through darkened eyes, we seem to see how faithfulness and fortitude came long after to the wife of Cesare Borgia.

The name and House of d'Albret, borne and built up, as we have seen, by a splendid and strenuous succession of seigneurs, soldiers, and seneschals, stood, at the close of the fifteenth century, at the summit of its greatness. It was the era of Alain, surnamed the Great, grandson and successor of

Charles II., Sire d'Albret. For his young heir, Charles, in accordance with the traditions of their House, was early on the look-out for a suitable bride. His hungry, roving eyes fell upon the greatest heiress of the day, a little girl named Françoise, of the illustrious House of Blois-Penthièvre.

In 1450, Guillaume of that House became the husband of Madame Isabeau de la Tour, daughter of Bertrand, Comte de Boulogne, and d'Auvergne, and of Jacquette de Peschin. At the close of his stormy life and brief rule over his patrimony, he left her the mother of three children, Françoise, Jeanne, and Charlotte. The greater part of his wealth their father bequeathed to his eldest daughter, with reversion to her sisters in case of her death. To assist Madame Isabeau in what promised to be a regency no less stormy than her husband's life had been, Guillaume had appointed by his last will and testament a council of several nobles of the Limousin to advise his widow, the greater part of the child's estates being situated in that district, namely, Jean, Vicomte de Condom, Jean de Pierre-Bussière, Gautier de Perusse des Cures, Bernard de Bonneval, and Bertrand de Lur. Isabeau, moreover, had good friends in the d'Albrets, inferior in rank indeed to her Houses of Blois and Limoges, but always ready to render neighbourly service, more especially to the mother of a little lady so richly dowered.

Before the expiration of her first year of widowhood, Madame Isabeau had become indebted to the d'Albrets for a loan, as well as for assistance of various other kinds. It was soon time to speak of the marriage of the child Françoise, who was kept hidden away in one or other of her ancestral castles of the Limousin. Her heritage was threatened and

contested on every side ; to bestow her as quickly as might be in marriage was, therefore, to place her and it in safety. Suitors naturally swarmed around the desirable prize. But Charles d'Albret, head of his House, of small account in worldly wealth, and having "much trouble to keep their state," was beforehand with them all.

Madame Isabeau was first induced to take as her second husband Amanieu d'Albret, Sire d'Orval and de Lesparre, brother of Charles II., thus paving the way for the betrothal of Alain, the latter's grandson and heir, to the heiress of Guillaume de Blois. The little seigniory of Rions, in the Bordelais, which Charles bestowed as a wedding gift on his grandson, was not worth 500 *livres* revenue, and scarcely worth naming in the same breath with the numerous and princely possessions over which Alain was now called to rule in the name of his wife. The betrothed couple were actually mere children, aged respectively ten and five, at the date of the signing of the marriage contract, November 24, 1456.

The astute Charles took every precaution which he deemed necessary in order to ensure that what d'Albret had won d'Albret should keep, for he stipulated that, in the event of the death of the child-bride before the consummation of the marriage, her place should be taken by her sister, Jeanne, and she, in like manner, should be replaced by the youngest, Charlotte, in a similar event. It was with these two ladies, it is curious to reflect in passing, that the Sire d'Albret was in fierce and frequent litigation throughout their lives and his.

The date of the marriage of Alain and Françoise de Blois has been much disputed, some alleging that it did not really take place until 1471, others

objecting that it would have been contrary to the customs of the time for the bride to have been left unclaimed by her husband until she was nineteen. Documents preserved in the archives of Pau, however, clearly show that on June 27, 1470, the young Sire d'Albret, writing from Montignac to the Seigneur de Bourdeilles, begs to be excused from attending to certain business matters which he has been invited to discuss with his correspondent on the plea that he is detained at the castle whence his letter is dated by the fêtes which are being held "in honour of his new marriage." Certainly Alain and his wife were minors and wards, and therefore presumably not yet established in a household of their own, in 1461, when Guy de Pons, Vicomte de Turenne, took forcible possession of their estate of Riberac, which he retained for eight years. In 1466, the names of husband and wife appear jointly on documents to which their signatures were necessary, the fact being that the betrothal ceremony, which alone united the pair until 1470, was as binding as that of the actual marriage.

The young Alain was now Comte de Gaure, de Dreux, de Penthievre, de Périgord, de Castres, Vicomte de Limoges and de Tartas, Seigneur d'Avesnes, and Captal de Buch. Henceforth, the House of d'Albret shares with those of Foix and Armagnac the proud eminence appertaining to the greatest feudal families of south-western France. After the wily paternal fashion of royal over-lords at this epoch, the astute Louis XI. had seen to it that the young Comte de Périgord, as Alain seems to have been styled immediately upon his marriage, should be brought up under the king's personal supervision at his court. In similar fashion, his

daughter, Charlotte, was afterwards to be trained in that "school of all the virtues," presided over by Anne de Bretagne.

The death of Charles II., and the young Alain's consequent accession to the responsibilities of his inheritance, put a final term to his tutelage. No longer a mere follower in the train of noble youths, representative of the flower of the French nobility, who attended on their sovereign, learning the method and the value of the courtier's craft, Monsieur with Madame d'Albret must take up their rôle as feudal lord and lady, and their residence at one or other of the stately châteaux which were at their disposal. They had but to choose; to-day, the "picturesque manor-house of Montignac, crowning the verdant gorge of the Vézère," together with Excideuil, Ségur, and Casteljaloux, transformed or in ruins, ring mere chimes of memory in the ear that strives to catch some faint, far-off echo of the days of their splendour and renown. But if the great houses of d'Albret were many, the home of their heart was one—"Nérac aux belles eaux." From Casteljaloux, indeed, the old chroniclers tell us, they were "never far away," since there, piously guarded by the Friars Minor, slept their dead. But Casteljaloux was neighbour to solemn thoughts; therefore, small wonder that they loved Nérac best.

The old town still sleeps "indolently," as one who loved her paints the picture for us, on both banks of her idle river. Still, the gracious valley of the Bayse smiles around her walls, and storied, shadowing chestnuts droop their spreading splendours above "one of the loveliest public promenades in France"; but it is at memory's good pleasure only that the image may be evoked of Nérac of the House of

d'Albret, the birthplace of Charlotte, and the home of her childhood. Gone are the stately stairways, the vaulted chambers, the haunted dungeons, the soaring towers, the escutcheoned walls, the "treasure of d'Albret"; whilst in an air of dreams alone the fountains which made her fair seem to toss aloft their sparkling waters.

Built beneath the shadow of the Priory of St. Nicholas, itself a foundation of the Abbey of Condom, in whose deeds appears the name of Amanieu I. in 1050, the Château of Nérac, dating from 1306, became the chief seat of the Sires d'Albret. It was here that Alain the Great brought his young bride; here also their four sons and four daughters were born to them. The styles and titles accruing to Madame d'Albret from her manifold inheritance seem to have been bestowed by distribution amongst her children, possibly during her lifetime, but certainly at her death. Thus Jean d'Albret, for whom his resourceful father was to secure the throne of Navarre by marrying him to its sole inheritrix, Catherine de Foix, disputed in after years with his brother, Gabriel, the seigniory of Avesnes, the latter, afterwards to be "one of the conquering army of Naples," being also Seigneur de Lesparre, which had been conferred upon his House by Charles VI. Pierre d'Albret was known as the Comte de Périgord; Amanieu, the fourth son, probably his father's favourite, afterwards Cardinal, contenting himself, it would seem, with the numerous ecclesiastical dignities which we shall see heaped upon him by the Pope who was to be his sister's father-in-law.

The Demoiselles d'Albret were Louise, Isabelle, Charlotte, and Anne. Louise d'Albret, whose marriage, in 1495, to Charles de Croy, Prince de Chimay,

put an end to a rivalry which had distracted their two Houses for many years, was, in right of her mother, Vicomtesse de Limoges, and Dame d'Avesnes and de Landrecies. The only one of the four sisters to die unmarried was Anne (Isabelle became the second wife of Gaston de Foix), a still more shadowy personage than Charlotte, a mere name in her mother's last will and testament, though it is recorded that her household consisted of no fewer than fifteen persons, including waiting-maids, a chaplain, a confessor, a valet de chambre, a secretary, a page, a tailor, lackeys, and a tambourine-player.

## CHAPTER II

The birthplace of Charlotte—The Château of Nérac—The state of the feudal family—A glimpse of the nursery at Nérac—The chrisom-cloths—The day's round at Nérac—A page of costume of the period.

To the scholarly researches of M. Achille Luchaire amongst the Archives of the Basses-Pyrénées, the chief treasure-house of the records of this great Gascon family, we owe a vivid and intimate picture of the d'Albret household keeping feudal state in their splendid châteaux. Magnificence was thrust upon them not merely by tradition, but by the claim, to be made good at all costs, of kingly favours bestowed by royal hands upon these their "amé et féal cousins." It is easy to read between the lines of "accounts rendered," in the hands of successive bailiffs of Nérac or Casteljaloux, of the desperate and distracted efforts of these responsible functionaries to reduce, or at least to keep within bounds, the expenses of those who saw no cause for practising economy themselves. The resources of the feudal exchequer were strained indeed to the breaking-point. Apart from the commissariat and clothing of the household, we find Alain, at an early date in his rule at Nérac, embarking upon the costly rôle of builder.

Charlotte was born and cradled within walls whose very stones were already blossoming into the characteristic graces of that Renaissance period which

was slowly advancing towards the shores of France, even to its remote Gascony. "The exquisite taste, the love of rich and elegant ornamentation," which distinguishes that era of rejuvenation inspired the unknown architect who added to the Château of Nérac, under the direction of its lord, that northern wing which bears the name of Alain. For that all men might know whose was the building, they might behold, carved deep into the stone, the monogram and armorial bearings of the House he was to "call after his own name"—"d'Albret quartering those of France," surrounding the collar of the Order of St. Michael brandishing his flaming sword, and trampling the dragon underfoot. Let us pause to remember that from the windows of this, her father's wing, the child Charlotte must often have gazed, happily in ignorance of the veiled future when, by a hideous reversal of the allegory overhead, the evil genius of her life, Borgia the infamous, should trample her life's pure lilies also underfoot.

Of the infancy of Charlotte d'Albret we know nothing, but twice the veil lifts for us as we raise the lid of "an old black coffer, rather high," in which Françoise d'Albret folded away—used for the last time—the *crameaux* (chrisom-cloths, placed on the heads of newly baptized children as soon as they had been anointed) which were once laid over her children, Charlotte among the rest, at their christenings. "One white silk napkin," so states the "Inventaire" of Madame d'Albret, "embroidered in gold thread, for spreading over the children; and one silk *crameau*; also another edged with silk on satin." And yet another glimpse—this time of the d'Albret children at Nérac rolling or toddling on the castle floor at their mother's

knee. "A little carpet or rug" (it is the "Inventaire" that speaks again) "in blue and violet wool, to play upon"—the mimic stage, that is to say, worn by successive baby feet and quaint baby gambols, on which Charlotte, who was to be Duchesse de Valentinois, also played her tiny part.

To return for a moment to the d'Albret resources, and the severe strain placed upon them, the favourite pastime of the Great Alain was one of the most expensive in which a gentleman of his day could indulge, for it was the sport of kings. Seven falcons, five tercel, and five merlins ministered, at one of his residences alone, to the Sire d'Albret's passion for hawking, a passion caught, it may be, from his "bon compère," Louis XI., whose devotion to this recreation was so great that we hear from the chroniclers of the period of his setting men to watch day and night (and to intercept on the way) for the falcons which the Duc de Bourgogne imported annually from Turkey, and which the royal emissaries succeeded more than once in transferring to their master's keeping.

The birds were the inseparable companions of their masters. We read of one nobleman assisting at Divine Service with his falcon on his wrist, of another claiming the right for his tercel to perch upon the altar itself. If a man sought a gift that should most effectually "make room for him" before kings, he invariably found it in a well-trained falcon. White gerfalcons were thus offered annually to Bajazet by those European sovereigns who courted his friendship. Noble ladies, too, shared their lords' pastime, and bore their falcons bravely on the slender whiteness of a rounded wrist.

We find his kinsfolk not unmindful of the Sire

d'Albret's tastes in this direction. Now it is his royal daughter-in-law of Navarre who sends him a tercel which he has bespoken, wishing that it may prove "the finest in her kingdom." M. d'Estouteville, his brother-in-law, again, whose full titles were "the high and mighty seigneur, Monseigneur Jacques, Seigneur d'Estouteville, de Haubuye, de Briquebec, de Ballemont, de Hontot du Bec, de Mortaigne, de Lois, Baron de Crasse and de Clanville," despatches to Nérac "one of the best," accustomed to its early bath, and then to be dried "before a good fire"!

Should the delights of hawking pall, had not the Sire d'Albret yet another reputation to live up to? Were not the men of his House "grand chasseurs de lièvres" as well as "coureurs de héritières"? On gala days, there were fêtes and tourneys besides, for the latter of which "fifty yards of cloth for the lists and a thousand little bells for the morris-dancers" must be fetched from Tours; whilst all day long the lord and lady kept open house for an endless train of dependents, of pilgrims, friars, and beggars. It was a picturesque if prodigal life, rich in colour, for social France was turning to the autumn of her feudal times.

Glance for a moment at the crowd of noble servitors, to say nothing of those belonging to a lower rank, who cross the stage of Charlotte's childhood. Pass by the ceaseless succession of chaplains, grooms, pages, stewards, controllers of the household, "all well-born," but none too proud to accept not merely wages, but livery, at the lord's hands; the pages must be provided with linen for shirts, a similar bounty being bestowed upon the nurses of "Mesdamoiselles" and their brothers; then roll up the

curtain on a page from the fashion-books of ancient France.

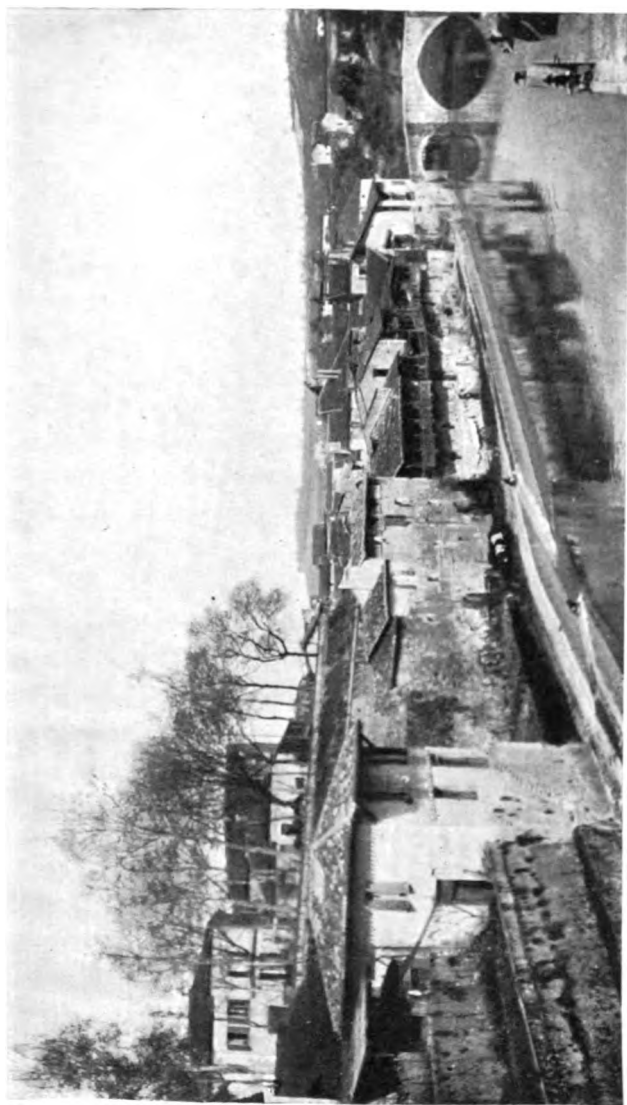
Now it is the Sire himself, issuing from the gates of his Château of Montignac, falcon on wrist, resplendent, for all his hereditary limp and fierce, blotched face, in a long robe of velvet, trimmed with fur, of which the blue taffetas lining alone costs thirteen *livres tournois*, or 390 francs. A doublet of crimson damask means a bill of two *livres*, or 60 francs, per yard. His shirt is of the finest linen, then costing three *livres*, or 90 francs, per yard. When he goes abroad (and far and frequent are his junketings), his more modest gown of tawny camlet, lined with violet cloth, costs, in material alone, eight *livres*, or 255 francs. Sober, yet scarcely inexpensive, are the black and violet liveries of his attendants, or those of his pages, the black velvet of their doublets relieved in their case by a blue satin lining, and by dangling laces and shoulder-knots.

For the lady of Nérac and her daughters there are incessant purchases of damask, velvet, cloths of all kinds and colours, furs of every description—was it not the era of Anne de Bretagne, of the ermine cognisance? Again and again the bailiff records in his accounts the presentation of bills by the furrier or pelterer “qui a fourré Madame et Mesdamoiselles.” The needlewoman “by the day,” moreover, would seem to be no mere modern creation of the exigencies of feminine fashion, for here is her account, twelve francs a day, for a month’s work at Montignac. Vast and vivid must have been the opportunities for gossip, for intrigue, for making oneself indispensable in more matters than “fit and style,” for making and marring the peace of

noble households, afforded by such a calling, then as now, to the peregrinating seamstress as she travelled from one aristocratic patroness to another through the feudal countryside !

The inventory of the wardrobe of Madame d'Albret, taken after her death, lets in a dazzling flood of light and colour on form and fabric of women's wear in those far-off days. Fine feathers, indeed, as we shall see, but none too fine for a lady whose court consisted of twenty-five to thirty ladies, and whose lord rode abroad with from fifty to sixty gentlemen in his train.

Here are ten so-called "ordinary dresses," generally of black cloth, which seems to have cost 225 francs the piece, or dress length, others being of satin, camlet, damask, and velvet, furred with leopard or lamb skin, and lynx, "much prized" at that date "by great men." Two of these black gowns, we learn from the inventory, Madame d'Albret did not live to wear. More delicate in tone is that peach-blossom-coloured "Rohan grey," furred with black lambskin, or that yellow damask, similarly trimmed, or that dress of grey silk camlet, with a wide hem of violet velvet. More sumptuous is that crimson satin brocaded with gold and furred with leopard-skin, that figured satin with civet trimmings, that scarlet splendour with ermine edgings and heraldic designs of wild boar "hors de gîte," that cloth of gold furred with ermine. "A bride's mantle, in blue damask, furred with ermine," reads superbly. The "cotte," or surcoat, gave much scope for diversity of colour and fabric. Françoise de Blois' were of violet damask edged with cloth, of yellow satin lined with black, of "plain, old, green satin."



NÉRAC.  
From a photograph by Owen John Llewellyn.



Ladies' night-gear of the period was no less picturesque than their day dresses. Madame d'Albret had "a scarlet coat to wear at night in bed," also a "night-robe of *gris*" (an undetermined fabric) "furred with cat skins," "inferior sable" being the trimming of another.

Materials for making up costumes seem to have been bought in large quantities, and laid by in chests and coffers. Madame d'Albret's wardrobe contained "two ells of black velvet, in the piece, new, two pieces of crimson satin, three pieces of violet velvet, one piece of black velvet," besides "one ell of black cloth to make shoes." Françoise d'Albret possessed nineteen gorgets (*gorgerin*), made of cloth and silk of various colours—two, however, being of "new velvet," and one, "old," of black velvet edged with ermine. Head-dresses innumerable figure in the inventory, of black velvet, black satin, violet velvet lined with black satin, eight silk caps, four flat head-dresses, one black satin hood, one of the same material furred with black lambskin, one of black taffetas, mourning hoods edged with white fur, thirteen other caps, a woman's low cap made of cloth of gold.

Madame d'Albret's jewels—how often must the little "Mesdamoiselles," Charlotte with the rest, have run their small, restless, prying hands through the shining treasures! They are worthy of their era, that moment when the finest expression of the goldsmith's and jewel-worker's art was being pressed into the service of the toilette and the boudoir. The exquisite nothings with which the craftsman's cunning was to heap the later caskets of the ladies of France of the Valois-Angoulême dynasty seem to be already taking shape in that of the lady of Nérac. For here, amongst such homelier items as "four

little silver spoons," and "one silver-gilt goblet with a cover," are such blossomings of the jeweller's fancy as a columbine flower of gold, another golden flower set with a ruby, a diamond, and a pearl, a golden dove studded with pearls, rubies, and emeralds, a golden spindle, a little silver cruse; modernity possessing no monopoly of the trinket, as contemporary inventories plainly show.

There are countless little gold chains, little silver eyelets for fastening dresses, a tag for the end of a lace in gold, "as large as a cherry," rosaries of pearl and coral, a handful of pearls unset, mirrors with handles and frames of tortoiseshell and amber, ivory frames and dials, a necklace of glass beads with gold lettering (probably of Venetian workmanship), a gold bracelet set with ten pearls, five rubies, and one diamond, silver-gilt incense-burners, silver-clasped missal-covers, reliquaries, miniatures, and enamelled Agnus Dei; we shall return to some of them when we come to consider the "Inventaire" of Madame la Duchesse de Valentinois.

Madame d'Albret's linen-closet was well stocked. "In a large wooden chest" were 94 sheets, "some of which were very fine, of beautiful Holland linen, and one of white silk" (probably a coverlet), "to put over the bed at Madame's lying-in"; 7 new tablecloths, 3 lengths for sheets, one dozen napkins; whilst in a "large cupboard in the attic" were 19 sheets, 31 table-napkins, "some very fine, tied together," 4 *buffets* (probably cloths to lay upon the dressers), a piece of linen to make tablecloths, 29 more tablecloths, 18 more napkins, and 3 hanks of thread.

There are traces in the inventory of Madame's skill with her needle; we shall see that skill inherited by one at least of her daughters. Here is her "small

case with scissors and other woman's implements"; "a square box containing embroidery"; a little casket with "gold thread for embroidering"; "a quantity of beads for working with, tied up in a kerchief." So we close the page which brings us near, at least, to Charlotte d'Albret's childhood, though neither smiling river, frowning ruin, nor fabrics long since crumbled into dust, yield the key.

The life of a little child in a feudal château! What was it like? How can we best picture it? Glow of colour, we have seen, and flash of jewels, and the sheen of sumptuous tissues, it had for setting; young laughter and babel of voices; coming and going of gentle and simple; windows crowded with little clustering heads and child-eyes wide with wonder and delight as their father rode forth for falconry or foray with his lordly train. What feast and flashing for dazzled eyes! What gorgeous array of stewards, valets, trumpeters, fiddlers, cooks, pantlers, heralds, pages, men-at-arms, and pursuivants! What noble horses, prancing and curveting as the fairy procession passed on into the distance where the child-watchers could no longer follow the trail! And so back from the wide window-seats of stone to the games of feudal childhood, and the little joys and sorrows of "angel infancy"—then, as now, cup and casket for brighter gems than craftsmen fashion, the "white, celestial thoughts" of untroubled childhood.

## CHAPTER III

Death of Madame d'Albret—Her place of burial—The Saint-Denis of the House of d'Albret—Alain as litigant—The captive of Casteljaloux—Wars and rumours of wars—Alain and the little Duchess—A child's antipathy—Plots and counter-plots—The statesmanship of Anne de Beaujeu—The rejected suitor—His revenge—The evil genius of Bretagne—"Mesdemoiselles" as regents—Marriage of the little Duchess—Joy at Rennes.

IN the records of the town of Casteljaloux, the judicial seat of the Sires d'Albret, the entry occurs, under date of December 11, 1480, of the expenses of funeral honours paid to Madame d'Albret. From the same source, it may be concluded that Charlotte's mother died in giving birth to a son, this latter event having been almost simultaneously announced by messenger from Nérac. Thence, the remains of the illustrious dead had been brought to rest under the shadow of St. Francis, in the Church of the Friars Minor at Casteljaloux, the Saint-Denis of the House of d'Albret, where, by reiterated last will and testament, its lords and ladies never failed to enjoin their interment. Here we know that three at least of Françoise's close kindred alike found successive sepulture: her daughter, Anne; her son, Cardinal Amanieu d'Albret; and, finally, her husband, the great Alain himself.

Françoise d'Albret left her husband to carry on, single-handed, that campaign of litigation in which he had never ceased to be engaged throughout their

married life, and in which, by reason of her own great patrimony, she was necessarily involved. It was at her indeed, no less than at the Sire d'Albret, that his sister-in-law, Charlotte de Blois, or de Bretagne, Dame de Montrésor (more than a match for Alain, it may be observed in passing, in litigiousness), hurls the reproach that, whilst the lord and lady of Nérac lived in luxury and abundance, she had hardly enough to clothe her.<sup>1</sup> But the Dame de Montrésor was but one of these with whom we find the Sire d'Albret in fierce and frequent combat for rights real or imaginary. Now it is the other sisters of Françoise, Jeanne, Dame de la Florellière, and Nicole, Dame de Boussac, who take the field against their irascible and covetous kinsman; then it is his own sister, Marie d'Albret, and his niece, Louise de Juge, who demand their rights at his grasping hands. With his brother-in-law, d'Estouteville, there is question of arrears of dowry appertaining to the wife of the latter, Louise d'Albret.

Gentlemen of the long robe, "solliciteurs," and agents of the Sire d'Albret in capital and province, fatten on the costs of protracted and interminable lawsuits touching seigniories and castellanies, municipal rights and ecclesiastical jurisdictions, fishing

<sup>1</sup> Charlotte de Blois, *dûe* de Bretagne, married, in 1475, Antoine de Villequier, Seigneur de Montrésor, in Touraine, de Menetou-Salon, in Berry, de Saint-Sauveur-le-Vicomte, and of the Isles of Oléron. He was a gentleman of the king's household. Their only son dying a minor, their estates were bestowed, in 1493, on Imbert de Bastarnay, Seigneur du Bouchage. The Dame de Montrésor afterwards took up her residence at the Château of Menetou-Salon, whence much of her personal property, household effects, and pictures, made their way to La Motte Feuilly, having been bequeathed, at her death, to her namesake niece, Charlotte. Montrésor, from which the Dame took her name, is charmingly described in Mr. Lees' "A Summer in Touraine."

rights and local taxations. A retaining fee of 3,000 francs per annum, or, in other instances, of 27 francs a day, many times multiplied, must have proved a heavy strain upon the seigneurial exchequer.

When the Sire d'Albret was not quarrelling with his relatives and neighbours, or on splendid circuit through his numerous demesnes, he was interfering, not always to his credit, in the concerns of his fellow-feudatories of the crown. Thus, he flings himself into the quarrels of the rival Houses of Foix, espousing, with an eye to the further aggrandisement of his own family, the cause of that branch to which Madeleine, mother of the young Queen of Navarre, belonged. But the methods of his levies, and the conduct of his Gascons, only cost him, in 1488, his lordship of Fleurance and Gaure.

Mesdamoiselles d'Albret must have seen but little of their father in the years that followed their mother's death. The fact can scarcely be regarded in the light of a loss. Unprepossessing in appearance, unlovely in mind and manner, he was not the man to attract and keep the love and devotion of his children. He remained to them, we may be sure, to the end of their lives, the pompous, fussy, bad-tempered gentleman whose constant exits through the gateway of Nérac and Casteljaloux were witnessed by them so often, and always with that poor show of dutiful admiration which faintly clothed intense relief at being rid of a stern, repressive shadow on their lives.

"Mesdamoiselles" in residence at Casteljaloux had deeper shadow close at hand. For here, in one of the lowest dungeons, with no prospect save the muddy moat, Charles d'Armagnac endured the rigours of his fifteen years' captivity, for no crime

save that of Naboth. And it may be that the little Charlotte and her sisters, at play in the castle courtyard, caught more than one glimpse of that imploring, wasted hand, thrust through its prison bars, which reached forth its frenzied appeal for justice and release to the Sieur de la Salle, riding into Casteljalous on that very business, which was the king's.

Picture the motherless children, then, growing up in an air thrilled with wars and rumours of wars, great and small, with shadow and suit; yet not altogether to be pitied, since they were not lacking in that best comradeship of all, which is the ineffaceable memory of those who have been young together in their youth; mothered, scolded, schooled, and tended by some ancient, loving tyrant of an antique nurse, whose name has not come down to us with that of Jehanne Porche, nurse to a greater little lady, Anne, Duchesse de Bretagne, she who was to have her say in the after-fortunes of one at least of the little flock at Nérac.

There was a moment, indeed, when, if audacious dreams had but clothed themselves in astounding fact, the little Duchess might have stood in yet nearer, actual, relationship to Mesdamoiselles.

The story of Alain d'Albret's absurd pretensions to the ducal crown of Bretagne, his ridiculous aspirations, which were a secondary consideration, to the hand of a child whose destiny was to place her twice upon the very throne to which he and she alike owed allegiance, has been told, and may be sought, in the fascinating pages of the chronicles of Bretagne. In this place it may be briefly outlined.

On January 25, 1477, the possible year of the birth of one of the Sire d'Albret's own children, and two

years later than that of Cesare Borgia, Vanozza's son, a daughter was born to François II., the weak, irresolute, luckless, last Duc de Bretagne,<sup>1</sup> and to Marguerite de Foix, his wife. If crowns were shaping for the infant heiress of the greatest fief of France in a yet unimagined future, one crown at least awaited her entrance into the world. Bretonne from first to last, Breton hearts acclaimed her advent with passionate love and chivalric devotion. Like Charlotte, she was left motherless; in her case, at the age of nine. And, if it is the experiences and environment of early childhood that stamp the character with its final, fated impress, then it is to the separate, widely differing childhood of Anne de Bretagne and Charlotte d'Albret that we must look for the source of their characteristic unlikeness.

From the early, impressionable years of the daughter of the weak<sup>1</sup> François de Bretagne, what harvest but the "great and lofty soul, the virile mind, and the generous, resolute heart and will" with which the verdict of her contemporaries unanimously acclaims her? Whilst to what end, save of a heritage of restlessness or of repose, have strife and selfishness ever surged around the cradle of a little child as they surged around that of Charlotte d'Albret? And if, as our fancy is pleased to confirm it, the witness of her effigy at La Motte Feuilly attests in some sort what manner of spirit Charlotte d'Albret grew to be, we know which of these two, bane or

<sup>1</sup> In spite, however, of the weakness of his character, François as Duc de Bretagne was a vassal to be reckoned with, as Louis XI. found. "He paid homage standing upright only," says M. Clément Simon, "and girt with his sword, without oath or promise; he styled himself Duke, by the grace of God, coined golden money, and refused the collar of St. Michael that he might avoid swearing fealty to his sovereign."

blessing, was aftermath of the childhood of the Sire d'Albret's daughter.

At what precise moment there began to shape itself in Alain d'Albret's greedy vision the ideal of a Breton fief of a Gascon kingdom, with himself as overlord of both at the side of the child Duchesse de Bretagne, we have no record. Much in evidence at the Breton court, craftily pressing into the limp hands of its easily influenced sovereign, the standard of revolt against the regency of Anne de Beaujeu, sister and tutoress of the young Charles VIII. of France, a revolt of which, from first to last, he was the moving spirit, it was not until 1480 that the Sire d'Albret found himself free, by the death of his wife, to enter the lists with the greatest of European princes as competitor for the hand of the infant heiress of Bretagne.

In return for what service—if indeed such were ever rendered—François pledged himself to bestow his baby girl upon this unprepossessing elderly widower, cannot be imagined. Doubt has long been cast upon the existence of any contract between the Duke and Alain to this effect; but closer scrutiny of the archives of Bretagne has brought to light, not only the document itself—destined to be haughtily repudiated by Anne, and impudently manipulated by Alain—but evidence, contained in a letter from Charles himself, that the cunning Gascon had contrived, by what trickery cannot now be ascertained, to secure the royal sanction and support in his schemes matrimonial. The match, in any case, as old Jaligny quaintly puts it, would have been “most ill-assorted, for the said lord was somewhat blotchy of complexion, and at least forty-five, while the damsel was only about ten years of age.” Or, to quote a later chronicler,

“his coarse and clumsy exterior, his fierce and harsh expression, his red face, covered with blotches, gave him the appearance of a chieftain among weather-beaten veterans, rather than that of the head of a great feudal family.”

But, happily for the child, Anne, her marriage-making was as yet of comparatively secondary importance. Bretagne was inextricably committed to a devastating and disastrous war, from which deliverance was only to come by the dark gate of defeat and humiliation. Throughout the chronicle of calamity, Alain d'Albret stalks like a presence of ill omen, now pledging his word to the king not to bear arms against him, and the next moment hurrying into Spain to make a bold bid for the support of Ferdinand the Catholic. Last of all, we see him, the first in “valiant flight,” as the cynical narrator puts it, from the fatal field of St. Aubin-au-Cormier, where on the heart of François II., less hardy than that of his evil genius, sustained its death-thrust.

We have a glimpse, by way of interlude, at this juncture, of Mesdames, regents at Nérac in their father's room. A council is appointed to assist them in dispensing justice and deciding knotty points of jurisdiction and vassal dues. Questions as to the quartering of a company of franc-archers in the town of Casteljaloux are referred to the young regents; and again we seem to see the charming group of grave, gracious Portias of the olden time, the slender, stately girlish figures, the self-possessed delivery of sentence, the graceful deference, while forgoing none of their girlish dignity, to the “reverend signiors” appointed to advise them. For these young girls, the eldest not yet eighteen, were grand-daughters of Isabelle de la Tour, who had ruled the

Viscounty of Limoges, and administered its affairs on behalf of her young ward and daughter with a firm hand, as certain rebels against her authority, priests, as well as laymen, found to their cost, during the minority of Françoise de Blois. The seven or eight year old Charlotte must have been a mere passive onlooker—if indeed she were present at all—at these grave deliberations in the great hall of Casteljaloux. It was foreshadowing fate, not her sisters, which allotted her, thus early, her destined rôle.

Another stage in the history of the final struggle between France and her great Breton fief had been reached meanwhile. The vanquished Duke dies, broken-hearted, at Nantes, and little brunette Anne ascends the ducal throne. Like one of his own swooping falcons, the Sire d'Albret suddenly reappears, with sinister swiftness, to take part in the funeral cortège of the dead Duke, and to receive, with the rest of the noble mourners, the customary grant of black cloth for his mourning habiliments. Similar sable for the little Duchess and her sister, Madame Isabeau; "two trained corselets, of black cloth, trimmed with miniver, and white lambskin for the wide, hanging sleeves; two little underdresses of black satin, with a velvet hem; two robes de nuit," made of the same cloth, trimmed at the wrists with fine, white lambskin. On their heads the child-mourners wear square "black head-dresses, black cloth mantles being provided for outdoor wear, with black velvet trappings for their palfreys."

History, that has not failed to report and revive before us the glories of Anne, twice Queen of France, is strangely unconcerned with the three years' reign of Anne, Duchesse de Bretagne, a reign unique, nevertheless, in all the annals of kingship. For it was to

sovereignty such as might well have dismayed the stoutest heart that this little girl was called. Who could tell what might be the purpose—of ruin or of restoration—that was being shaped in the crafty policy of the Dame de Beaujeu, sole arbiter, as it seemed, of the destinies of Bretagne? To what quarter, where clouds were apparently gathering from every point of the horizon, was the little Duchess to look for the faithful friend who should be “the medicine of life” for her and for her people? Should she find such a one in the Maréchal de Rieux, the tutor of her father’s choice, whom his last will had imposed upon his successor? In Dunois, master of diplomacy? In her governess, Françoise de Dinan, Comtesse de Laval, masterful, lover of plots, yet true friend to Anne, if not always to the interests of her duchy.

For a while, the pose of friendship at least fell to the Sire d’Albret. His prospects with regard to the Breton alliance had brightened with the death of François II. For not only was there the mere weak will of a girl-child to be coerced; the Sire d’Albret had now not only a friend at court, in the person of de Rieux, who, we are told, found him the least impossible of the suitors for the hand of his young sovereign; supreme at the side of the little Duchess was his own half-sister, Françoise de Dinan, daughter of Catherine de Rohan, afterwards wife of Jean d’Albret, Vicomte de Tartas, father of Alain le Grand, by her first marriage with Jacques de Dinan.

In vain Madame de Laval and de Rieux threatened and cajoled; in vain the elderly suitor himself sought to bring ridicule upon his absurd efforts at antique arts of forgotten methods of fascination.

Sooner than become the wife of this superannuated widower, with his ugly, red face, his fierce temper, and his eight children, Anne declared that she would go into a convent. She was upheld in her resolve by Dunois, who had another destiny in view for his young sovereign. The appeal of the personality of Maximilian, Emperor of Germany, to the fancy of a romantic child was irresistible. It was the unfailing spell of chivalrous bearing and good looks cast over dreaming girlhood. By proxy, Anne became Empress of the Romans ; at heart, she was all Maximilian's already.

The rage of the disappointed suitor knew no bounds. Since he might not be her husband, she must henceforth reckon with an enemy. Flinging off his poor pretence of friendship, he demanded from the Duchess, in what rough and insolent terms we may picture, the fulfilment of the promise made in her name by her father. Anne had no answer for him save her scorn. All Bretagne was on fire in a moment, the great Breton families on the side of their girl-Duchess, the bourgeoisie and petty nobles on that of Alain. The story of the great conspiracy of which he was the prime mover has yet to be told ; de Rieux too turned traitor ; Nantes, grown rebel, shut its gates against the Duchess ; only Rennes, the faithful city, leapt to its feet as one man to offer her haven and hospitality. Within its walls she was safe from d'Albret ; but he had his revenge. Now we find him intercepting a sum of 2,000 crowns on its way to her hands ; then there is a plot, hatched in the Château of Châteaubriant, the demesne of Madame de Laval, to carry off the wilful little lady of Bretagne.

In the hour of her own triumph, Anne repaid all this treachery with the most noble generosity,

restoring the Maréchal to her favour, and indemnifying both Madame de Laval and himself for all the losses which they had suffered through the war of Bretagne with a pension of 100,000 crowns, "in memory of the good, great, and praiseworthy services" rendered by "our cousins" in the past. For the moment, however, destiny darkened around the valiant little Duchess. She stood alone. Perils and perplexities multiplied their menace; 25,000 golden crowns glistened in the outstretched palm of Anne de Beaujeu, the price of the surrender of Nantes to the French army. The Sire d'Albret earned his reward, March 20, 1491, "for his very great, virtuous, useful, and profitable service."

But the child-Duchess had faith, even then, in her star. Yet, would the distant Maximilian be able to save her and her duchy, though at the eleventh hour?

The way of escape was indeed close at hand; but none could have predicted that it was to be as unexpected as it was dramatically offered.

That other Anne, "pearl of nobility, of *gentillesse*, and of *savoir*," that "least foolish of all women," who had proved herself true daughter of the astute Louis XI., had no intention of allowing any other lordship save that of the brother she had ruled with a firm though kindly hand, to snatch away from his crown a jewel already close to sparkling there. At all costs, Bretagne must become and remain French. Conqueror, yet in all courtesy, Charles VIII. sought, and was granted, an interview with the stout-hearted and hard-pressed little Duchess at Rennes. In an instant, the betrothal vows which bound him to Marguerite of Austria, the child who was growing up at his court awaiting the moment when she should be called to share his throne, were

chains forged but to be broken. Driven by conspiring forces, ambition, fear, for her country and for herself, the homage of kingly surrender in her young suitor's eyes, longing for peace for Bretagne, for a sense of security to which her childhood had been a stranger—who shall say which of these motives swept Anne on and upward to a throne which she mounted, nevertheless, in triumph ?

With the light-hearted repudiation of reckless youth, utterly regardless of all rights save that of its own dreams clamouring to be fulfilled, Maximilian and Marguerite were swept imperiously from the stage on which it had seemed their parts had been irrevocably allotted. Attended by the trustiest of her Bretons, the Sire de Coetquen, Jean de Pontbriant, and, above all, by her Chancellor, Philip de Montauban, "brave soldier, wise counsellor, devoted servant, or rather, friend," the little Duchess set forth on her bridal journey to Langeais. There, in the great hall of the Château, which still bears her name, the marriage contract was signed which gave peace to Bretagne and a crown to its sovereign. In cloth of gold, queenly with sable, Anne passed to her marriage altar ; Louis d'Orléans, who was to be Louis XII., and her second bridegroom, standing by amongst the noble witnesses.

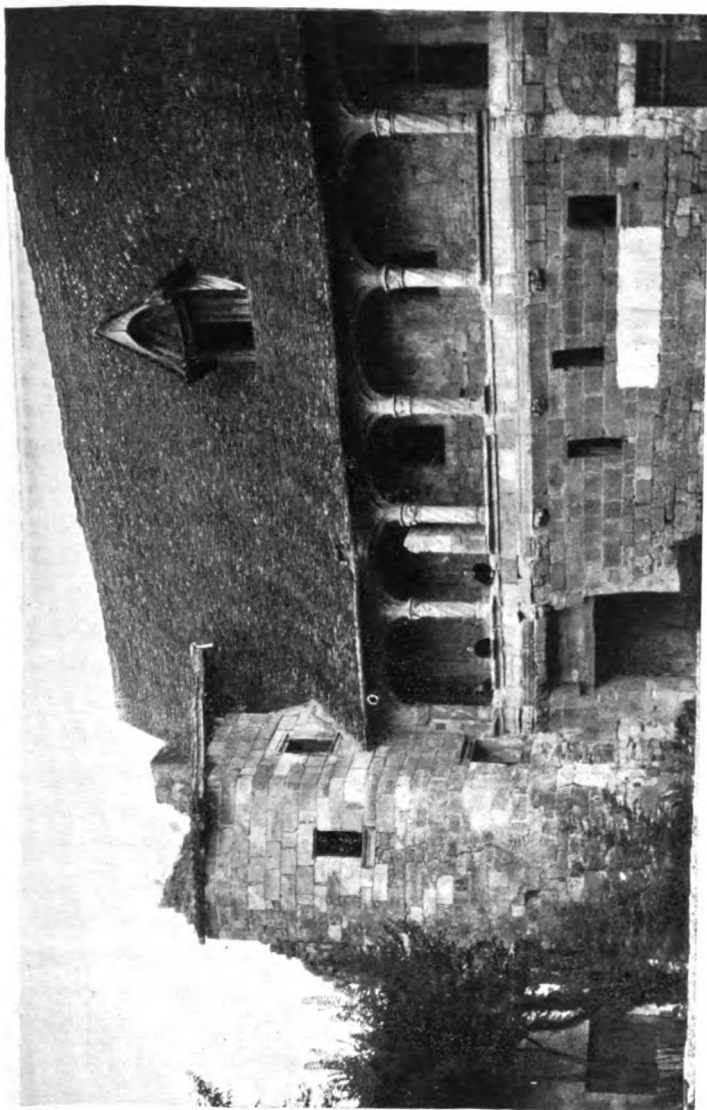
The star of the Sire d'Albret had set—it seemed for ever ; but the streets of Rennes the faithful blazed with *feux-de-joie* and ran with white wine and red ; bells rocked in her towers, torches flared, morris-dancers tinkled their *grelots* ; tabors and clarions and trumpets, made mad, mingled music at the crossways ; for their Duchess was Queen of France, yet Bretonne still.

## CHAPTER IV

Girl-gossips at Nérac—The romance of Françoise de Dinan, Dame de Châteaubriant—The passing of little Madame Isabeau de Bretagne—Her funeral honours—Charlotte goes to court—"A nursery for queens."

News of the royal wedding at Langeais travelled down to Nérac, in the leisurely fashion of the day, in due course, to be warily discussed, if at all, within hearing of the Sire d'Albret. For the fierce temper which had frightened little Anne must have waxed more fiery than ever with the realisation that he had been flouted and made a fool of by a mere chit of a girl. So that it would be with bated breath that Mesdamoiselles talked among themselves of that sudden stately ride from Rennes, which was not without its appeal of romance to these girl-gossips; of the wonderful trousseau-velvets, damasks, furs, satins, and fine linen; of the quaint yet queenly head-dresses, with "cornettes" and "oreillettes" complete; of that most wondrous robe of all—for worth, the bridal robe of an empress—with its precious stiffness of brocading gold and its 160 sable-skins for trimming, the whole priced at 160,000 francs of the currency of to-day.

If only they might have seen these wedding splendours for themselves, we can hear Mesdamoiselles exclaiming. If only—penned in by castle walls from the great world beyond Nérac—the girlish



THE CHÂTEAU OF NÉRAC.  
From a photograph by B. Tuja, Nérac.



longings would shape themselves, they might have had an eye-witness's account of the stately ceremonial which placed the crown of France upon the brow of a Breton Duchess ! But their aunt, Madame de Laval, to whom they might have owed such longed-for telling, was missing from her old, accustomed place of honour at the side of Anne de Bretagne in the supreme moment of her marriage. The ruins of Châteaubriant, burnt to the ground by the orders of Louis de la Trémouille, commanding the king's forces in Bretagne, were the symbol of the failure of Françoise de Dinan's ill-timed intrigue and the passing of her empire over Anne de Bretagne. Yet Châteaubriant rose once more from its ashes, and the heart of the royal pupil returned again to its old allegiance and affection.

Before the curtain finally falls on this arresting figure of the early days of the great queen, her story, well worth telling, may be briefly sketched in this place. For she was probably the fated instrument whereby Charlotte d'Albret's feet were set on the path of honour, desirable above all others in the eyes of "toute demoiselle de haut parage qui tenait de passer par la cour d'Anne," but which was too narrow, at the last, for one such demoiselle, to a lonely track, sown with sharper thorns than those which trailed across her briar-fretted Landes of Labrit.

The House of Châteaubriant, which numbered amongst its sons a goodly count of heroes, was none the less rich in noble and notable ladies. At their head stands Françoise de Dinan, only daughter and heiress of Jacques de Dinan and Catherine de Rohan (afterwards wife of Jean d'Albret, and, by her second marriage, mother of Alain le Grand). No history

of any woman of her time reads with the like rendering of romance. Betrothed in early childhood to François de Laval, Seigneur du Gavre, heir to Guy XV. de Laval, himself almost an infant, the young heiress was carried off, not, it is said, without the connivance of her mother, by Gilles de Bretagne, Seigneur de Chantoce, brother of François I. de Bretagne, who kept her a close prisoner in the Château of Le Guildo, whence she was transferred to a surveillance scarcely less of a captivity at the court of Bretagne during the tangled and troublous years which only ended for her insistent and ill-fated suitor in his death at the hands of his brother's paid assassins.

Harsh treatment was meted out to the little Madame de Chantoce, as she was called at the Breton court; her jewels were taken from her and committed to the custody of one of the ladies of the Duchess; her chronicler notes the contrast between the splendid items in her inventory and the modest "black fillet" which was all that she was allowed to wear on her head. Successive changes on the ducal throne seem to have brought to Françoise some modification of the rigours of her lot; but the bars of her prison were still bars, though gilded; and through them we see her stretching little eager hands of girlish appeal to the unforgotten young Seigneur du Gavre, imploring him to fulfil the old promise by which she still held herself bound, and to deliver her from the tedium of her long tutelage at the court of the Duc de Bretagne. Whether that touching call ever reached him, whether his lost bride had long ceased to be more than a shadowy memory in the heart of her laggard knight, we know not; deliverance came indeed to Françoise, but it was in strange and unexpected guise.

Not François de Laval, but his father, Guy XV. of the name, was to prove her Amadis. The bridegroom was forty-four, Françoise was but fourteen ; but the marriage, which took place on October 3, 1450, seems to have proved a happy one. At least it won her freedom, high rank, and a stately home, though the memories of her dark days at the Breton court kept her from taking the place to which her new honours would have entitled her. She was not forgotten in her chosen exile at Châteaubriant. A New Year's gift of a golden rose, enamelled, and studded with rubies, diamonds, and pearls, mounted on two stems of gold, reached her from François I., a graceful peace-offering by way of quieting the ducal conscience regarding his predecessors' confiscation of the jewels of Madame de Chantoce.

It was not until the following reign, however, that Madame de Laval reappeared at court. The influence, it may be hazarded, which drew her back was probably that of Marguerite de Foix, wife of the then Duke, François, between whose House and that of d'Albret, now akin to her own, through her mother's second marriage, there was constant intimacy. Françoise de Dinan seems to have borne no malice to the House which had cast so dark a shadow over her childhood ; so great a lady could afford to forgive a wrong thus handsomely atoned for.

The death of the Duchesse de Bretagne, in 1486, gave into the hands of Madame de Laval the charge of her two motherless girls, Anne and Isabeau. By his will, their father further confirmed this charge. The years of her tutelage were brief ; but they lasted long enough to give the character of the last Duchesse de Bretagne some of the tenacity and forcefulness which marked that of her governess. Fatally drawn

within the tangle of her half-brother's meddlesome and mischievous schemes, Françoise de Dinan paid for her complicity in the Breton conspiracy by the loss of her empire over Anne de Bretagne. Yet Anne, as we have seen, remembered and rewarded all there was to hold in remembrance; even as she forgave Jean de Rieux in the like case, since, traitor to her, he had yet been true patriot, though mistaken in his methods.

Madame de Laval withdrew to her demesne of Châteaubriant, where her Château, one of the most fortified of mediaeval castles, suffered the penalty of burning at the hands of the French army. Romance followed her into the autumn of her days. At the age of sixty-eight she contracted a marriage, kept secret until after her death, with a simple squire of Picardy, Jean de Proisy, who survived her by many years, being mortally wounded at the battle of Pavia in 1524. Françoise de Laval lived to see her pupil mount the throne of France—though she was absent from her side in the great hall of Langeais—widowed, and yet again queen of the fleur-de-lys; she died January 3, 1500. Anne was not unmindful of the House of Laval; a son of her former governess held some post at her court, for his death is recorded in 1503 at Amboise.

The year before the marriage at Langeais, Mesdemoiselles should have assisted, had not death intervened, at a stately ceremonial which was designed to compensate the Sire d'Albret in some sort for the loss of his fantastic dream of ducal sovereignty. On July 13, 1490, Duchess Anne, then ruling her duchy with marvellous discretion and common sense for so young a girl, issuing manifestos and safe-conducts, reprimands and decrees, with perfect command of speech and action, made solemn promise

of the hand of her little sister, Madame Isabeau, to Gabriel d'Albret, Seigneur d'Avesnes, third son of Alain le Grand. But scarcely had there begun to be talk of wedding festivities at Nérac, of the fashioning of bridal finery for Mesdamoiselles—the travelling dressmaker, it may be, already summoned to the Château—of possible places in the household of the little bride for one or more of her husband's sisters, when sorrowful tidings came from Nantes.

These selfsame tidings come to us across the centuries from a human document of most pathetic interest, unmatched in poignant touches by any other fragment of weatherbeaten parchment ever brought to light, from its ancient hiding-place between two leaves of antique binding. The scrap of parchment records the expenses of funeral honours rendered to little Madame Isabeau, who died August 24, 1490, a month after her betrothal to Gabriel d'Albret. Here are disbursements, duly recorded, for services—some, alas, unavailing—rendered to the dying child: sacred service, as of the chaplain who heard the little girl's last confession, and gave Extreme Unction, receiving a gratuity of 60 sous; secular services of Maître André Lefranc, the physician, "pour avoir aidé à pancer notre dicte sœur durant sa maladie," 7 livres, 10 sous; of Ollivier Boucher, tailor, who furnished the "little robe of violet velvet," "d'un habit royal," in which the dead child was arrayed for her stately obsequies in the choir of the Cathedral of Nantes, together with pall and hangings of cloth of gold and black stuff. There are mourning grants to the household; money for masses to Carmelites and Dominicans; fees for the torch-bearers; payments for ribbon, serge of Arras, and other necessities for the sad occasion.

Fortune, it would seem, frowned on ad'Albret-Breton alliance ; but the Sire d'Albret was soothed back to good humour after this second check to his ambition by the generous pension of 120,000 crowns conferred upon him by Anne by way of indemnification.

Was it at the moment of the young Duchess's mourning for her only sister and inseparable companion, that Madame de Laval deemed the opportunity a favourable one to introduce into the household of her noble pupil the distraction of a new plaything—a little girl, fresh, unspoiled, pliable, apt for courtly ways, whose presence might go far towards healing the ache of Madame Isabeau's vacant place at her sister's side ?

The precise date at which Charlotte d'Albret made her first appearance at that court of which, on the authority of the Argus-eyed Brantôme, she was to be one of the brightest ornaments, cannot, however, be determined. In the opinion of M. Yriarte, it was not until 1497 that Charlotte, together with two of her sisters, joined that circle of illustrious girlhood which made the reign of the Breton Queen a memorable one for French womanhood. At that date her eldest sister, Louise, had been for two years the wife of the Prince de Chimay ; the young Princess, a great lady in the capital, may have been quick to realise all that her chaperonage might mean to her youthful relations at Nérac, and taken an early opportunity of summoning Mesdamoiselles to take advantage of their married sister's good will. Yet it seems more probable that, directly or indirectly, it was to the influence of Madame de Laval, their father's half-sister, her young kinswomen owed their admission to the court of Françoise de Dinan's former pupil.

Life had been full and brilliant for Anne—though

sorrow had not passed her by, as four little tombs could testify—since the days when the Dame de Châteaubriant and Alain d'Albret had dealt so treacherously with her; the Queen of France could afford to forgive the wrongs of the Duchesse de Bretagne; no lingering shadow of a grudge against either the faithless, familiar friend, or the rough, irascible old wooer, chilled the welcome which awaited Mesdamoiselles at that door of destiny for every "demoiselle de haut parage" at that date.

Girlhood had slipped swiftly by at Nérac of the smiling waters. Little Charlotte, not yet dreaming how the star of the Queen-Duchess was to draw her own into fatal conjunction, never to be requited, had had happenings enough, marriages, and crownings, to keep her eyes and thoughts busy in her own small world. In 1494 her eldest brother, Jean d'Albret, had been crowned with his Queen-bride, Catherine, sovereign of Navarre, at Pampeluna, whose boy-Bishop, from the age of seven, had been Cesare Borgia, now a handsome lad of nineteen, still worthy, as it seemed, to be the future, fated, fairy prince of Charlotte d'Albret's innocent dreams. The following year saw the marriage of Louise d'Albret to Charles de Croy, Prince de Chimay, to which allusion has just been made; so that the Sire d'Albret, very much in evidence, it may be taken for granted, at both coronation and marriage ceremony, was once more on excellent terms with himself and with fortune; a duchy had indeed slipped irretrievably from his grasp, but his House was recompensed with kingship, and the de Chimay alliance had finally healed an old quarrel.

If indeed it was in the year assigned to the event by M. Yriarte that Charlotte d'Albret came to the

French court, it was against a background that rippled with stir and colour. The thriftier economic counsels of Louis XII. had not yet begun to prevail ; " the futile and fantastic campaign " of Charles VIII. had laid at the feet of France enthroned among her lilies ideals of charm and culture which were indeed to find their full acceptance with the later dynasty of the Valois-Angoulême, but which, nevertheless, won instant recognition and queenly welcome at the court of Anne de Bretagne.

The daughter of François II. had inherited from her father that passion for display, that opulence of imagination, and withal that generous sympathy with classic craftsmanship, which are in such marked and piquant contrast to that strain of Breton simplicity which ran like a thread of homespun through her more brilliant qualities. The portals of fate had swung back to let Charlotte in to a place of enchantment, as we shall see ; abroad, too, there was stir and splendour, for the Old world was still fired by the tidings of the New, rising, naiad-like, from unimagined oceans. A splendid and stirring world, yet thick with sinister and skulking shadows, for the Lenten thunders of Savonarola were denouncing iniquity in high places beyond the Alps ; on the walls of Roman shrines Michael Angelo's majestic brush moulded the vision of a judgment to come.

The summer of that year saw the mysterious murder of the Duke of Gandia, Cesare Borgia's elder brother, and the hysterical, short-lived grief and remorse of Alexander VI. ; the marriage of Madonna Lucrezia of the sunlit hair to Alfonso, Duke of Bisceglia ; and the crowning of Federigo of Altamura as King of Naples, by the hand of the

## THE COURT OF ANNE DE BRETAGNE 61

Cardinal-Legate, Cesare Borgia, who was to be Duc de Valentinois—affairs of fantasy, all, in her hearing (if, indeed, they ever reached her ears), who was but newly bestowed in that august tutelage which was not only, in the maternal visions of great ladies, to secure for their daughters a strict and sheltered upbringing, but to smooth the way for many of them to a brilliant marriage, if not to a throne itself.

"The great Queen, like another Vesta or Diana," writes Brantôme, "kept all her attendant nymphs in the strictest discipline, tempered, nevertheless, by the sweetest courtesies." "The court of Anne," says a later chronicler, "circumspect, thrifty, yet brilliant, was chaste and puritanical, even in its merry-making." The picture of the "*Bretonne, posée et tranquille*," has been immortalised for us on more than one jewelled vellum. On those glowing backgrounds she lives again, a prim yet queenly figure, in that severely elegant dress which she adopted, and exacted no less from her ladies, her homely, honest, Breton face framed in the characteristic head-dress which still survives amongst the peasant-women of her "*pays*," the "*cape Bretonne*" of black velvet, outlined with finely plaited white linen, encircling the face, and falling over the shoulders. So we see her on the pages of that "magical and matchless volume," her "*Livre d'Heures*"; "her gown is brown and gold, trimmed with dark fur; her hair is brown; her necklace is composed of coloured jewels."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Anne de Bretagne, as the Venetian ambassador found her in 1492, was "short, slight, with a limp, plainly perceptible, in spite of the high heel which she habitually wore, a pretty brunette, very artful for her age, so that whatever she takes into her head must be brought about at all costs, either by tears or smiles."—Baschet, "*La Diplomatie Venitienne au XV<sup>e</sup> Siècle*," p. 325.

And, when we turn from that staid, stately figure of their royal mistress to that encircling company of "grave ladies and demoiselles sedate," which Brantôme of the hundred eyes recreates for us in the pages of his piquant chronicles, it is to remember that somewhere in their ranks, as they toil, under the royal supervision, at their allotted tasks of tapestry, is Charlotte d'Albret.

She is there, appealing yet elusive, sweet as Anna Sforza of Este, yet as shadowy, most worthy of her place in that courtly crowd, yet indistinguishable from those whom we would gladly thrust back from the foreground that we might come a little closer to this one amongst them all. For who that knows least of her who was fated to be the daughter-in-law of Vanozza does not long, with a yearning that grows, at times, to a sense almost of exasperation, to identify her amid the noble garden of girls of which she formed a part? And if such identification might be, beyond the shadow of a doubt, what conquest could compare with the thrill of triumph it would bring to wrest from that still, painted figure, from those demurely down-dropped lids, the dreams they veil? Pure and sparkling we know them to have been, for they were the dreams of girlhood; yet dark and dreadful, since they held, still wrapped in the mystery which was his delight, the form and face of Cesare Borgia.

Dreams are all of her that we may shape, as we watch her flying needle; be sure that decorous seclusion of the Queen's handmaidens harboured hints and hopes of higher destinies yet hid. Could it well have been otherwise? Was not their "school of all the virtues" the talk of Christendom? And were not its kings, seeking brides to share their

thrones, and to be the mothers of kings to be, for ever making suit to Anne, that "grande marieuse," to that end? At any moment, kingly choice, their queen's caprice, might call one flower of that brilliant parterre to bloom in still more exalted places. Such expectation demanded that they should bear themselves as though already wrapped in the folds of the purple.

Like her contemporary, the Duchess of Urbino, Anne required in her ladies "exemplary gravity and unsullied honour"; that they should be "handy, addicted neither to gossip nor wrangling, and never talking unnecessarily in her presence." And if she exacted from those whom she "directed, dowered, and disposed of," blind submission to her will, her care for those who served her, from the noblest lady to the meanest groom, was, as we shall see, no less maternal than masterful.

The household accounts of her treasurer, Jacques de Beaune, abound with touches which let in, between long columns of dry figures, a flood of light upon this aspect of her character, touches which redeem a mere calendar of long-paid bills from dullness, and invest long-discharged indebtedness with a fragrance like the vanished "poudre de violette musquée" which once diffused its delicate perfume through the rich fabrics and the fine linen of her antique *armoires*. In another chapter we shall strive to seize some faint and fugitive essence of that "sweet smell and blossom" of Anne's "good deeds" gone to dust.

## CHAPTER V

**A Prince of the Church—The bribed Conclave—Rome welcomes the new Pope—Vanozza of the Vineyard—Cesare Borgia, Cardinal, who may be Prince—The shaping of the shadow that was to fall on Charlotte d'Albret and her dreams—A campaign of compliments—Raimondo Centelles—The Sire d'Albret much in doubt.**

ON August 6, 1492, the Conclave of Cardinals rendered necessary by the edifying death of Innocent VIII. began their deliberations, twenty-three Princes of the Church being present in the Sistine Chapel. It was well known, in the opinion of those best qualified to judge, that the struggle for the tiara would be fierce and bitter. The foreign Powers, whose Ambassadors had undertaken, in conjunction with a chosen band of noble Romans, to guard the imprisoned Conclave, were no less active in their intrigues on behalf of the candidates put forward by their respective governments than the Italian states themselves. France, Spain, and Portugal, in the persons of their envoys, each counted on victory for their favoured Cardinal; but Rome shrewdly foresaw, in the palace which Rodrigo Borgia had lately built for himself on the Piazza Branca, the most likely successor to Innocent VIII.

“Shrewd, versatile, fluent in speech, a fine-looking man, a brilliant cavalier, cheery and genial in manner,” all these were valuable assets indeed in days when the sovereign state of the papacy was that of a secular

prince in the first place, of a prelate in the second ; but Cardinal Borgia was possessed of still more potent means to his end. He was the richest member of the Sacred College. Cardinal and Vice-Chancellor, by favour of his uncle, Calixtus III., when still a mere youth, he was possessed, in Spain alone, of upwards of sixteen bishoprics, besides towns, villages, and abbeys in Italy. With unblushing promptitude and prodigality, he began to scatter promises of golden rewards in every direction, in return for the votes which would enable him to ascend the throne of St. Peter.

Under pretext of placing his wealth in safety during the deliberations of the Conclave, states Sismondi, he lodged four mules' loads of silver with Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, to whom he also paid, after his elevation to the pontificate, the further price agreed on between them, of his own former lucrative dignity of Vice-Chancellor of the Papal Court ; Cardinal Orsini receiving, at the same time, as his avowed reward for his vote, Rodrigo Borgia's Roman palace, together with the two castles of Monticello and Soriano ; Cardinal Colonna, the Abbey of Subiaco, with all its castles ; Cardinal Saint Angelo, the bishopric of Porto, with the new Pope's own furniture, which was magnificent, and his cellarful of the most exquisite wines ; the Cardinal of Parma, the town of Nepi ; the Cardinal of Genoa, the Church of St. Mary in Via Lata ; Cardinal Savelli, the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore, and the town of Civita Castellana ; several others being rewarded with handsome gifts of ready money.

Few of the colleges had the strength of will to withstand these brilliant blandishments. Only Giuliano della Rovere, and his cousin, Raphael

Riario, withstood all bribes. Those who held aloof were powerless to turn the scale. "The election was decided in the night between August 10 and 11, 1492, and in the early morning the window of the Conclave opened and the Vice-Chancellor, Rodrigo Borgia, was proclaimed Pope as Alexander VI."

Though it is said that King Ferrante of Naples wept at the news, and the Roman notary, Latinus de Masiis, cried out that it was a judgment on the sins of Rome, yet, on the whole, men followed the lead of the new Pope's compatriot, the Spanish Bishop of Carvajal, "auguring a brilliant Pontificate" for "so distinguished and genial a Pope, whose good looks and dignified bearing won the hearts of the common people." Yet, unless the characteristic portraits of Alexander VI. which have come down to us are in conspiracy of caricature, it is hard to reconcile these claims with the coarse and sensual features, the crooked nose and crafty eye with which successive painters and medallists have made us familiar. Rather are we inclined to applaud the thumbnail sketch of Schivenoglia, who declares that he "looked like a man capable of any crime."

With native audacity, however, the Borgian Pope passed, beneath the searchlight of torches and bonfires, to his splendid coronation. We read of Rome thronged with applauding crowds, of streets "decorated with costly hangings, exquisite flowers, garlands, statues, and triumphal arches." Profane epigrams were flung at the feet of the enthroned Pontiff by sycophantic poetasters. The bells of Florence and Milan joined their pæans with those of Rome. Learned delegates from the Italian cities flocked to Rome to proffer laudatory addresses.

Nor were the Powers behind Italy in their homage. A German chronicler salutes Alexander VI. as "one who will prove most serviceable to all Christendom," being "affable, trustworthy, prudent, pious, and well versed in all things pertaining to his exalted position and dignity." Justice took her place at the right hand of the new Pope, simplicity and economy were the rule of the papal household. Men were well on the way to forget that there was a darker side to the life of the Pontiff.

That darker side may be seen displayed in all its bald ugliness in the numerous histories which deal with the story of the Borgian papacy. Here it may be briefly outlined; for from that darkness emerges the black shadow which was to fall on the pure and noble heart of Charlotte d'Albret.

In 1460 Rodrigo Borgia, then Cardinal, became the lover of Vanozza Cataneis, born in 1442, who, although married for convention's sake, to no less than three successive husbands, was the mother of his four children, Cesare, Juan, Jofré, and Lucrezia. Spain, and not Italy, seemed at first the destined sphere in which these children were to work out their several destinies. Spanish benefices and bishoprics were conferred upon his young kinsmen by Innocent VIII., while a Spanish marriage was arranged for Lucrezia. But, as we know, fatality stepped in, and, for the undoing of more than one of them, drew them, in the track of their father's greatness, back to Rome. As early in the pontificate of which such golden hopes had been entertained as 1493, the King of Naples writes that "the Pope cares for nothing but the aggrandisement of his children by fair means or foul."

First to be recalled to his father's side by the

beckoning of the paternal purple was the young student, Cesare, Bishop of Pampeluna from the age of seven, Bishop of Valencia, with an income of 16,000 ducats, at the moment when he was acquitting himself brilliantly at the University of Pisa, coincident with his father's elevation to the papacy. Recalled from the tutelage of the famous Filippo Decio, the young Cardinal found himself introduced to a circle which has been compared by Gregorovius to that of the old Roman senators. Cesare was henceforth, not merely a prince, the son of a reigning sovereign, welcomed to his father's court with all the honours and fondness which his budding vanity could demand, assigned a household, apartments, state, of his own—he was the colleague of those Princes of the Church of whom we read that they “lived the lives of secular princes, and seemed to regard their ecclesiastical garb as simply one of the adornments of their rank. They hunted, gambled, gave sumptuous banquets, and entertainments, joined in all the rollicking merriment of the Carnival-tide, and allowed themselves the utmost licence in morals.” “They went about in martial attire, and wore swords elaborately decorated. As a rule, each Cardinal had several hundred servants and retainers living in his palace, and their number might be, on occasion, augmented by hired *bravi*. This gave them a following among the populace who depended on the Cardinals' Courts for their livelihood. Most of these Princes of the Church had their own factions, and they vied with each other in the splendour of their troops of horsemen, and of the triumphal cars filled with masques, musicians, and actors, which paraded the streets during the Carnival, and on all festal occasions.”

That the impressionable young Borgia flung him-



**THE CHÂTEAU OF CHINON.**

From *Country Life*, by kind permission of the proprietors.



self, as to the manner born, into these scenes of secular magnificence, numerous contemporary witnesses attest. The envoy of the ducal court of Ferrara is received by him in audience at his palace of the Trastevere, "clad altogether as a layman, in silken doublet, a slight tonsure alone reminding the Ambassador that he was in the presence of an ecclesiastic." Cesare was armed habitually either with a hunting-dagger or an oriental scimitar, and, with that passion for pageantry which was to find its crowning expression in the princely entry into Chinon a few years later, the Cardinal of Valencia was frequently to be seen taking part in processions, in Turkish dress, at the side of the unhappy captive Djem, the hostage of the Vatican.

It is the Cesare of the "smiling countenance and the ready laugh," which, in common with his sister, Lucrezia, he inherited from their father. All went well with him in those days; not yet impelled along the baleful path on which he was afterwards to wade, through seas of blood and treacheries, foul crimes and base misdeeds, we could wish that we might keep the early portraits of Cesare Borgia, for Charlotte d'Albret's sake, unsullied to the end.

The new King of France may be said to have begun his reign with a campaign of compliments, an access of politeness. It was the cheapest market in which he could traffic for the ends he had in view, and the "Father of his people" was of an economical turn of mind.

He begins, prudently, with the Church. King of Jerusalem and the Two Sicilies, Duke of Milan, even, as he had proclaimed himself, to the alarm of the ruling House, at the moment of his accession,

his friendship eagerly sought by both Florence and Venice, it was indispensable to the matrimonial and political schemes with which the opening months of his reign were charged, that he should secure, above all, aid and amity of the Sovereign Pontiff, Alexander VI., who had been Cardinal Borgia. He proffers, therefore, first of all, to the Holy See, his solemn and filial obedience.

Response from Rome was as cordial as the King could have desired or hoped for. But Alexander also had his plans, and knew his man.

The composition of the papal embassy is a matter for great care and discretion. "Persons of unusual distinction," that is to say, the Archbishop John of Ragusa, the Prothonotary Adrian of Corneto, and Raimondo de Centelles,<sup>1</sup> Vice-Chamberlain, are selected to bear congratulations, with definition of papal claims, caution regarding Naples, the Orsini and Colonna alliance, Pisa and Florence, and protection of the implacable enemy of the House of Borgia, Giovanni della Rovere, ex-Prefect of Rome. Politeness persisting, the King promises to give his

<sup>1</sup> In selecting Raimondo Centelles as one of the papal embassy to France, the Pope's choice fell on one of his most faithful friends and intimate "camerieri." The connection between his family and that of the Borgias dated from the cardinalate of Rodrigo Borgia. There had been a moment in the history of the friendship when the ties which bound them together seemed to be on the point of being still more closely drawn. It was at one time proposed to betroth Lucrezia Borgia to Don Cherubin de Centelles, lord of Val d'Ayora, the bride being then about eleven. Nothing, however, came of the project save the betrothal ceremony, of no binding importance whatever, we may be certain, in the eyes of Rodrigo Borgia, who was afterwards to dispose of this same Lucrezia with astonishing celerity and successive caprice in the marriage market. Friendly relations, nevertheless, continued uninterruptedly between the Borgias and the Centelles. They may have lived to congratulate themselves that the Pope's daughter had not become the wife of one of them.

royal attention to all these points in turn. Meanwhile, Louis permits the Pope to see a little more plainly beneath the mask of filial good-will. An envoy arrives in Rome specially charged to request on behalf of the French King the necessary dispensation to enable him to dissolve his marriage with Jeanne de Valois, and to contract a second alliance with the Queen-Dowager, Anne.

Pending the foregone conclusion of the papal deliberations, there was ample scope, nearer home, for the exercise of diplomacy with regard to a second, though scarcely less important, instrument in the game which Louis had set himself to play.

The accession of Louis XII. was viewed in one direction with serious misgivings; nor was the Sire d'Albret himself one whit behind his son and daughter-in-law, Jean and Catherine, the young sovereigns of Navarre, in those misgivings. Still enjoying his comfortable annuity of 12,000 *livres*—"the royal price," which, as M. Clément Simon says, Anne de Bretagne had "paid for her freedom from marriage with him"—to say nothing of sundry sums long spent, 100,000 ducats (crowns), and 125,000 *livres* by way of indemnification, there was little comfort for her former rough wooer in the possibilities suggested by the reflection that neither the Queen of France on the one hand, nor her husband on the other, might have quite forgotten the Sire d'Albret's pillaging and persecuting tactics of ten years before.

Certainly, even if the legend of Louis d'Orléans having been a rival of Alain d'Albret for the hand of the child-heiress of Bretagne may be relegated to its proper place in their history, enough remained to render his reception at the French court extremely

doubtful, in view of past delinquencies. Such good cause was there for hesitancy on the part of the Sire d'Albret that it is almost with surprise we learn of his positive presence in Paris in May, 1498, at the moment, that is to say, of the accession of Louis XII.

## CHAPTER VI

The household of Anne de Bretagne—Some of her ladies—Their duties—The Queen's wardrobe—Her love of scents—Her bath—Her capricious love of clothes—Her furs—Her dealings with her ladies and her disposal of their future—"La grande marieuse"—Patroness of art, music, and the dance—Her Order of chivalry—The other Charlotte—Death of Charles VIII.

IN 1492 the household of Anne de Bretagne, as Queen of France, consisted of 16 ladies and 18 demoiselles. By 1498 the numbers had risen to 59 and 41 respectively. All received stipends, ranging from 1,300 to 100 *livres tournois*. Amongst the names which have come down to us are those of Anne de Bourbon, Dame de Montpensier, Anne de Foix de Candale (of whose brilliant after-fortunes and brief queenship we shall hear more later), Jeanne de Jambes, Dame de Beaumont, Catherine de Barres, the Demoiselles de Tournon and de Graville, Anne de Rohan-Guéméné, Marie d'Escart, Anne de la Grange, Orfaize de Bois-Guéméné, and Isabeau de Parthenay.

The Queen's woman of the bedchamber at the date of Charlotte d'Albret's arrival in the royal entourage was Aliénor de Discastillo, wife or daughter, possibly, to that "Loppe de Discastillo," chevalier, and maître d'hôtel of the Queen's household, who was specially deputed by his royal mistress to attend Charles VIII. on his expedition into Italy, where he paid for his devotion on the field of Fornovo by

the loss of all his personal property, a loss which Anne, with her customary generosity, promptly made good, even to the extent of replacing from her own private and princely stores some of the reliquaries, jewels, etc., which Discastillo, we are told, had but recently purchased at Antwerp Fair.

The post of Anne's waiting-maid must have been no sinecure. To this important female functionary were assigned the hundred and one minute yet momentous details of her royal mistress's toilette. She it is who orders pins by the thousands, needles by the hundred, as witness the accounts of Jacques de Beaune, the Queen's treasurer. It would be Aliénor's duty to supply and replenish the store of dainty sachets which were used in such profusion to perfume the royal wardrobe and linen-closet. Now it is a yard of green taffetas, now a yard of red (this latter to be filled, we are told, with "roses de Provence"), which are furnished by the royal mercer, Michel Carré, the Queen's apothecary, supplying five pounds at a time of violet powder, "musquée," for filling the sachets.

The Queen's bath, too, would be scented with the same delicious powder, the bath itself being a kind of tub, with a lid or cover, the water being poured in from two little casks, or barrels, opening at one end, and shut by means of a lock and key, the water being heated by pans containing charcoal, which were placed underneath the tub, the latter being raised on two tripods.

The waiting-maid would have the surveillance of the Queen's wardrobe, transmitting her orders to the royal "tailleurs." This, in itself, was a duty demanding the exercise of much patience and dis-

cretion. For Anne's love of fine clothes<sup>1</sup> was only exceeded by her insistence on every detail thereof being carried out in strict accordance with her instructions. She returns a costume because the sleeves do not please her, or because she had changed her mind about the fashion of the dress. Sleeves of the period were sometimes of the same material as the dress, more frequently of contrasting fabric. Thus, for a silk dress, the sleeves would be of velvet; for a velvet robe, of silk or satin.

She was no less capricious touching the disposal of her superb sets of furs on her various gowns. Sable was ordered to replace black Lombardy lamb-skin on her wedding-dress, the latter not being considered sufficiently regal for the occasion. Sixty-six strips of ermine were allotted to one robe, 700 to another, of crimson velvet. The Queen's robe de chambre was usually of tawny damask, trimmed with silky white lambskin. Her stockings were of the "fine scarlet" which was specially designed for royal wear; her shoes of leather with cork soles lined with blanket cloth for travelling; her brodequins of morocco lined with lamb's-wool.

But the life of the Queen of France, the life into which Alain d'Albret's daughter found herself admitted, was not merely filled with the trivialities of a woman of fashion. It is easy to sneer, in these days of light-hearted and cheap marrying and un-making of marriages, at "*la grande marieuse*," with her portable altar, and her "dominant passion for match-making." If she held herself better

<sup>1</sup> Anne de Bretagne received the Milanese Ambassador, March 30, 1492, in so superb a toilette that Ludovico Sforza, on receiving the description of the costume from his correspondent, asked for the exact pattern to be sent to him.

qualified than those who served her to decide the all-important question of their matrimonial future, one cannot be sure that she always failed to establish a kindly correspondence between her royal will and the dream-desires of girlish hearts. At least, she spared no pains to make these marriages worthy of her queenly patronage. She saw to it that they were generously dowered. Now it is Isabeau de Busseuil, *dûte* de Martenay, who receives a marriage portion of 2,000 *livres tournois*. Anne Lucas, on her marriage with Claude de Puisieux, Seigneur de Villethierry, is rewarded with a dowry of 3,000 *livres tournois*, "for the good and pleasant services rendered by her to the Queen from childhood."

Should ready money run short, as happened sometimes even to fifteenth-century French queens, Anne does not hesitate to pledge her jewels for dowry purposes. Isabeau de Saffre, Marie de Sainte-Amadour, and Nicole de Tournon, three of her "filles d'honneur," owed their respective marriage portions to the proceeds of "une grosse pointe de diamant à facettes," which the Queen pledged with the Lyons bankers, and redeemed a few years later. Suitable and trustworthy escort is provided for the wedding journeys, whilst some trusty majordomo of the palace is occasionally despatched to the provinces to summon and attend to the Queen's side some widowed gentlewoman and her pretty, portionless daughter, for whom Anne has arranged a marriage with a suitable *parti*, one of her gentlemen of the household.

Anne's ladies were housed and rode abroad like queens. All the sumptuous and stately appointments of the royal toilet and table were at their disposal no less than at that of their mistress herself.

The humblest waiting-woman of them all might move, between walls that blossomed with marvels of "wrought needlework," in daily sight of superb jewels overflowing exquisite "écrins," of painted canopies meet to overshadow the dreams of sleeping beauties, of carven caskets and coffers, of precious conceits in gold and silver and gems, reliquaries, bénitiers, and comfit-dishes—of all the ordered magnificence, the studied splendours, in short, of the era of Anne de Bretagne, not all unworthy to have ushered in the more flamboyant period of François I.

The air of that enchanted time of the Queen-Duchess throbbed with music of its own, and with the tripping feet of dancers. The least lady in Anne's household might be within hearing of melodies made by cunning court players on their manifold instruments—by Jacques Lorignie on his manichord, by Jehannot du Bois and Little Jean on the tambourine, by the lute-players, Master Paul and Hieronymus. For each of them Guillaume Leclerc, Hervé, Rion, and Jean Joffé, minstrels from the Queen's own beloved "pays de Bretagne," might set the secret of their inmost hearts to music while they sang.

Minstrels, too, from far-off foreign courts, as from Sicily, played at times before the Queen and her ladies. Mountebanks and strolling players, like the "Gallands sans soucys," bringing with them memories of Anne's Breton childhood, enlivened the summer evenings or the winter afternoons with "moralities, farces, and sport." Dancers came from beyond the Alps to entertain the court; 35 *livres tournois* was granted to one François Nicole for the maintenance of his niece, Lucrezia, brought from Florence to dance before the Queen.

At the New Year none are forgotten. Little Jean, the tambourine-player, receives 66 *sous tournois*. The "Gallands sans soucys" are presented with 20 gold crowns. On Innocents' Day and at Easter the pages may expect a gift of money, conditional on their having been to confession at the festivals. Anne understood the things that matter in a boy's estimation. Perhaps her little Charles Orlando, that fearless "bel enfant, audacieux en paroles," stayed with her just long enough to teach her that. The starved mother-instinct seems to underlie that gift of 35 *livres tournois* bestowed upon one of her pages, Guillaume de St. Forjeril, "to help him to take part" in a tournament at court. We should like to know that Guillaume, with a grateful heart beating under the fine appearance which the Queen's generosity enabled him to make in the lists, carried her colours to victory therein.

In many another direction, also, her rare womanly intuition impels her to countless kindly actions. She who loved beautiful clothes and fine linen and splendid jewels so much, could appreciate to the full, nevertheless, the sting and stab which women in all ages have known so well how to inflict—themselves beyond reproach in the same direction—on the woman who is less well dressed than themselves. Can we not read an intuition like this, otherwise unexpressed, between the lines of that entry in the accounts of Jacques de Beaune concerning the grant to Jeanne de Daillon (grandmother of the scandalmongering Brantôme) of 300 *livres tournois*, to purchase two dresses, one of crimson velvet, and the other of tawny satin, "in order that the said Jeanne might make a good appearance in the service of the Queen, wherein she was constantly employed."

## THE ORDER OF THE CORDELIÈRE 81

In illness, those who had served Anne de Bretagne in health might count on her motherly care and solicitude. A sick groom receives a gratuity of 100 *sous tournois* "on account of his long illness." She sees that Anne de Candale, nearest to her heart, perhaps, of all her ladies, is provided with eight yards of black camlet, "to be warmly lined with fur, the nights being cold, during an illness." It is brought to the Queen's notice that a simple "girl of the palace," Jeanne de Masle by name, has lost her mother; she is given 60 *livres tournois* for mourning.

In countless ways like this, Anne manifests her good-will towards those who are dependent on her bounty; and we shall see one at least of her "nursery for queens" following in after years in the footsteps of her illustrious tutoress, looking well in her turn to the ways of her household, while we mark in her the same thoughtful care for their welfare, the same sympathetic interest in their smallest concerns, the same practical relief of their necessities, as might have been expected from a pupil of Anne de Bretagne.

Life was not all play, nor all shadow, for the ladies of the court. They had their appointed tasks of needlework, their royal duenna herself supervising them. Besides tapestry, the busy needles produced large quantities of embroidery for ecclesiastical purposes. A chasuble, worked by Anne and her ladies for Leo X., was formerly in the Church of St. Denis. Instructed not only in needlework, but in virtue and duty, they might aspire to that Order of Chivalry which was specially instituted by the Queen to reward conspicuous worth amongst her women. The insignia of this Order consisted of a necklace of precious stones in the form of a cordelière, the design having been furnished by François

Robertet, secretary to Anne de Beaujeu, for 35 *livres tournois*. The necklace was formed of red and white enamel letters interlaced, each letter surrounded by a black cordelière, the Queen's comprising thirty-two double Roman A's. From the festooned rope, the old chronicler tells us, the recipients of the device were to be "admonished to live chastely and holily, having always in remembrance the bonds and fetters of Jesus Christ."

Out of doors, those of her ladies who were garden-lovers would find in Anne sympathetic encouragement in that most delightful of all pursuits. We have but to turn the pages of her famous prayer-book to note how this taste of the Queen's inspired the craftsman to whom we owe that peerless volume. The calendar of miniatures which adorn those jewelled pages reflects the passing of spring into summer, of summer into autumn, of autumn into winter, in the Italian gardens planned at Blois by Pacello de Marcoliano. As the artist saw her, it may be, seated among her ladies, weaving a garland, or accepting from the hands of some young girl a basket of fruit or flowers of Touraine, so he painted her, and so she lives for us in her perfect prayer-book.

Anne was also a lover of birds. Louis des Sauvaiges, "du pays de Languedoc" had 10 *livres tournois* bestowed upon him to enable him to return to his own country, whence he had brought, for the Queen's amusement, "several little birds, some to fly, and some to catch flies." There was also a linnet that sang in her room. Greyhounds of the famous breed of Basse-Bretagne were imported to her court. Their dog-collars were of black velvet, with pendant ermines, attached by a buckle of gilt wire. Besides mules, there were 50 horses in the Queen's

stables, 16 hackneys or mares for mounts, 16 for carriage use, 6 for litters, and 6 ponies for pages. The *chariots branlants* or suspended carriages in which the Queen and her ladies usually rode were richly upholstered in velvet and cloth of gold; the trappings of the horses were of black velvet worked with red silk and gold thread, with tassels to match.

We read of the Queen's entrance into Lyons in 1498, shortly before her widowhood, in a carriage preceded by six pages dressed in crimson velvet, embroidered with her initial, the same device appearing on their caps. The carriage in which the Queen rode was drawn by six hackneys, and hung with trappings. Her ladies followed in a similar carriage. A mule for the Queen's use was led, caparisoned in black and gold, with gold and white fringe and tassels. The Queen on this occasion wore a robe of cloth of gold, with a long mantle of red velvet, and on her head a Breton coif of cloth of gold with precious stones.

It was not only a luxurious yet industrious, but also a cultured environment. Anne de Bretagne, directress and duenna, was also patroness of letters, arts, and crafts. Around her throne gathered a whole army of sculptors, painters, illuminators, embroiderers, workers in metal, wood, marble, stucco, and jewels. From the colony of Italian craftsmen planted at Tours by Charles VIII., came the Chevalier Guido to paint her "*parement du lit*," the colours of which were barely dry when Charlotte d'Albret came to Amboise. And it is because of her, in short, that we seem to linger unduly among these pictures of the court of Anne. For after all that environment is Charlotte's also. Here, in the brief span of sunshine that went before storm and shadow, she brushed

shoulders with Jean Marot, proud to be the poet of the "magnanimous Queen"—she must have known of the gratuity of 25 *livres tournois* which he received on July 25, 1498; with Jean Meschinot, the Breton poet, who acted for some time as the Queen's maître d'hôtel, his son, Gilles, being also in her service as page.

Known to Charlotte too must have been André de Lavigne, poet-chronicler and secretary; "David of Italy, geometrician"; the learned Père Antoine Dufour, to whose sermons she would have often listened; Jean Bourdichon, court painter, to whose indefatigable and versatile brush nothing paintable came amiss—neither historical subjects, miniature, landscape, nor portraits;<sup>1</sup> and the great master, Michel Colomb, who carved the tomb of Anne's father and mother in the Cathedral of Nantes. Charlotte was no book-lover, if her "Inventaire" may decide the point; yet she could not have failed to gaze with genuine girlish delight on the contents of the Queen's library, comprising 1,300 to 1,500 volumes, the greater part enriched with a wealth of gold and coloured lettering on vellum backgrounds.

Charlotte was close at hand, if not actually witness, of the seemingly slight, yet, in the sequel, tragic accident which brought the reign of Charles VIII. to a close at Amboise, the home of his heart, blossoming beneath his eyes, ere they grew blind in death to

<sup>1</sup> Louis XII. placed Pérreal with Bourdichon amongst his valets de chambre, a post corresponding with that of the modern sovereign's gentlemen of the household, and which the former painter also occupied in the Queen's entourage. M. Maulde de la Clavière distinguishes between the work executed by these two artists, pointing out that Bourdichon was chiefly engaged in illumination and secondary work, whilst Pérreal soared to the higher flights of art. Pérreal accompanied Louis XII. on his expedition to Italy in 1499.

all earthly beauty, under the hand of "excellent sculptors and artists from Naples," into the splendour of stone which Amboise remains at the present day. The death of Charles VIII. was another step, all unconscious as Charlotte d'Albret was of the fact, in her own destiny. Her name does not appear in the list of ladies on whom mourning outfits were bestowed, in accordance with court custom ; but we read of a more important personage, "Mademoiselle la Princesse de Tarente, Charlotte d'Anjou," receiving for that purpose four and a half yards of cloth, which cost seven *livres* (ten francs) the yard.

It would have seemed the wildest of all wild dreams to Charlotte d'Albret, had it been suggested to her at that moment that her fortunes were destined to be shortly in unsought rivalry with those of her more notable namesake. Charlotte of Aragon, daughter of Federigo, Prince of Altamura, afterwards King of Naples, and of Anne de Savoie, grand-daughter of Yolande of France, third daughter of Charles VII., had been sent to France at an early age to be brought up at the court of Louis XI., where a place had been found for her in the entourage of the child-Princess, Marguerite, daughter of Maximilian, the betrothed, but afterwards repudiated, Dauphine.

That the tie which bound her to the fortunes of her child-mistress was more than the mere self-seeking and self-centred service of a maid-in-waiting, is attested by a letter which was addressed by Charlotte de Tarente to the King at the moment of Marguerite's departure for France. The reply to that letter was her immediate transference to the household of the new Queen, where her rank was decreed to be that of a royal princess, a separate establishment being allotted to her, consisting of a

governess, a nurse, an esquire, a chaplain, two valets de chambre, one valet de fourrières, whilst a litter, a mule, and several horses were further placed at her disposal.

Witty, high-spirited, and good-humoured, she was one of the most popular members of the Queen's household, Anne, from the very first, bestowing upon her countless proofs of affection and friendship. Among the gifts she received from the Queen, we read of a flagon, basin, cup, and ewer, of solid silver, costing 250 *livres tournois*, 15 *sous*, 7 *deniers*. The Venetian Ambassadors report meeting Anne de Bretagne, on August 3, 1498, riding abroad attended by "several noble ladies, amongst them the daughter of the King of Naples."

The year of Charlotte d'Albret's début at the French court coincided with the prelude to that dramatic entr'acte which preceded the marriage of Cesare Borgia. For in that year news came to the Princess de Tarente, as Charlotte of Aragon was known at court, of the coronation of her father at Naples by the Papal Legate; 3,000 golden ducats were furnished from the papal treasury that Cardinal Cesare might make such royal progress as he loved; on July 22 he left Rome, escorted by a splendid retinue. Again and again we shall see him thus flashing, like a miasmatic meteor, across the stage whereon he was to strut but a few years longer.

With hands that men whispered were red with blood of his murdered brother, the Duke of Gandia, Cesare set the Neapolitan diadem of kingship on the head of Federigo, who paid for the condescension of the Borgia, we are told, with "torment"; for thus the Florentine Ambassador writes of the imperious demands and shameless cupidity which seem to have



**THE CHATEAU OF BLOIS.**

*From Country Life, by kind permission of the proprietors.*



marked the Legate's conversations with the new king. The son of Vanozza remained in Naples until September, long enough for the fatal spell of Naples to have worked upon him to an end that boded ill for the new reign and still worse for the Princesse de Tarente, unconscious of calamity, beyond the Alps. For there can be little doubt that, from the moment of his placing the crown upon the head of Federigo, the sovereignty for which it stood became, as though by some malefic alchemy, a thing to be desired above all else in Cesare's sight ; and what was desire to a Borgia save possession ?

It is after the return of the Legate to Rome, at all events, that we first hear of the purple as having grown to be a burden too heavy for the tender conscience of the Cardinal of Valence. The Pope, not yet embarked on his campaign of commotion throughout Europe in order to find a bride for Cesare, was, nevertheless, at the moment, concerned with other affairs matrimonial in his family, there being question throughout this year, 1497, of a new alliance for Madonna Lucrezia. The means and manner of her brother's secularisation must, therefore, remain for a while in abeyance. The air of Rome was thick with scandal ; pious souls shuddered at the strange portents of flood, fire, and phantoms, which were abroad ; and so the year drew to its welcome close.

## CHAPTER VII

"The little dark, deformed Queen of France"—Her sacring delayed—  
The Sire d'Albret to the fore—Royal favours—The Queen-Duchess  
keeps her court at Étampes—A sober pageant—Preparations in  
Italy for the departure of the Pope's "dear son."

THERE can be no doubt that even such courage as is usually at the disposal of a bully and a bandit would not have sufficed to brace the Sire d'Albret's sinews in the face of the emergency with which he found himself confronted, had not reassurance, and much more, been forthcoming. Fortunately for the perturbed old schemer, however, he had, at the very heart of things, in the capital itself, his right-hand man and very good crony, Simon de la Romagière, his resident agent in Paris, keeping his finger on the pulse of events for his master's benefit, and keeping him, at the same time, through the medium of ceaseless correspondence, *au courant* of all that went on, according to the gossip of the court, in the most secret mind of the King himself.

On those babbling tongues, and in that royal recess alike, one theme excluded all others, even that which usually crowds out all else at the opening of a new reign—the coronation ceremony.

Since the day when she had been thrust, at the point of a sword which was to be turned, with refinement of cruelty, against her own poor misshapen body and pure soul, Jeanne de Valois, the faithful,

## THE SIRE D'ALBRET COMES TO PARIS 91

forsaken wife of Louis d'Orléans, Guicciardini's "little dark, deformed lady," who was to be a saint of France, this uncrowned Queen had never known such travestry of fame as now, when papal commissaries and royal judges were gathering like a flock of vultures to profane and annul and subject to a pitiless and shameful scrutiny, the secrets of a marriage whose sorrows should have kept it sacred.

Matter of little moment to him and to his House, we can picture the Sire d'Albret muttering to himself, as he read of these things in the hand of Simon de la Romagière ; yet, looking closer, there was somewhat between the lines which must have put spurs to what was actually, whether so expressed or not, Simon's summons to his good friend, Alain, to repair without delay to Paris and the court.

We can picture the old campaigner, blustering, fussy, avaricious, apt for plots, greedy of gain, as of yore, preening himself, with renewed vigour and sharpened wits, after years of enforced inaction, at Nérac, for flight towards a wider stage once more, poised, one instant, on the brink of anticipation and expectancy, taking breath, like a skilful swimmer, before plunging into the eddies of plots and policies, such as he loved above all else.

Times going by turns, were arrears of old manoeuvres miscarried to be made good to him, after all ? If Simon de la Romagière spoke truly, though by hints, he should know at his journey's end.

The old, covetous, crafty spirit stirred with the lust of battle as he made his entry into Paris, where hints would clothe themselves, on his arrival, with hope. Welcome awaited him not only from his trusty friend ; with those of his own flesh and blood whom he had successfully bestowed within the walls

of the capital, the Sire d'Albret had every reason to be as proud as he was satisfied. He found his elder daughter, the Princesse de Chimay, a great lady ; his younger, Charlotte, near to being one—how great, neither he nor she had as yet imagined—with a reputation at court which proved that the beauty of the d'Albret women had not passed her by ; she was “ one of the loveliest girls in France,” according to the testimony of diplomatic despatches.

But not even hints, however reassuring, had altogether prepared Alain for the effusive and flattering warmth of the reception from which he had feared so much. His son and daughter-in-law, who had but recently shared those fears, were now the “ good friends and allies ” of the King of France, himself not far behind, judging from the shower of royal favours and conspicuous honours which began forthwith to descend upon his grizzled head. June 9 saw him Captain of Châteaueux de Bayonne, and of the Castles of Saint-Esprit, on the amazing “ account of his grand sens, suffisance, science, loyauté, et prudence.” A month later, Alain did homage for Gascony, Périgord, Limousin, the county of Castres, and the barony of Lezignan.

The Queen-Dowager, keeping great state still at her town house with the superb complacency of a woman who has not lost, but has yet to gain, proved no less cordial in her reception of her ancient suitor. Not the vestige of an affront to his self-esteem marred the friendliness of her welcome. She, no less than Louis, had need of the Sire d'Albret.

Compliments and courtesies and captaincies could not have been long in forcing home to the wily old intriguer himself the fact of that need. He was too practised a schemer not to recognise the flash and

feint of weapons with which he was an expert. All that was now in doubt—a short-lived one—was the end to which he owed this astonishing sequence of favours. That doubt set at rest, all that remained to him was to drive the best bargain he could. If Louis and Anne had need of him, they must pay his price.

Thus, one by one, we see them mustering to their odious traffic in human souls, rogue and schemer against schemer and rogue ; what chance for noble souls, like those of Jeanne de Valois and Charlotte d'Albret, with such array in battle against them ?

Historians have insisted too much on Louis' "desire for peace beyond the Pyrenees" as the sole motive which weighed with him in arranging the Valentinois-d'Albret marriage. There can be little doubt, rather, that it was Charlotte d'Albret whom Louis had in view from the first as a suitable wife for Cesare Borgia ; the alternative Aragonese alliance, which was well to the fore at the moment of the Sire d'Albret's appearance in Paris, could never have been very near to the King's heart, in view of his designs on Milan. It was to this fact, no less than the Queen's friendship and sympathetic support of the suit of the chivalrous Breton gentleman, Nicolas de Laval, whom she afterwards married, that Charlotte d'Anjou owed her fortunate escape from the fate which was to fall so heavily on her namesake.

Thus, then, was the first, forward flight of the shuttle, that first weaving of webs wherein Charlotte d'Albret's life was to be fatally and inextricably entangled ; whilst she, remote and blindfold, though in the midst of it all, sat and smiled, even as that Lucrezia, whose sister-in-law she was to be, sat smiling—how unlike the smiles—while Pope and Prince made and unmade her marriages.

Anne, Queen-Dowager, with her ladies in attendance, Charlotte d'Albret amongst them, left Paris in August, 1498, to resume sovereign state in her duchy. It was the month in which, according to his contemporaries, Alexander VI. began to make a stir in France, in order to find a wife for his "beloved Cesare." On August 13, Louis de Ville-neuve, the French envoy, waited on Cesare Borgia with the gift from his master of the castellany of Issoudun, and 100 lances (one lance consisting of a knight and four men at arms).

Consent to the widowed Queen's departure from his capital had only been wrung from Louis, now her avowed suitor in the eyes of all Europe, at the price of her pledged and royal word to become Queen-Consort for the second time as soon as the decree of divorce from Jeanne de Valois had given him his freedom. By the terms of this agreement, which was ratified a few weeks later at Étampes, Anne placed the town and castle of Nantes as security in the hands of the King, Louis de la Trémoille being appointed governor for a year, taking a solemn oath to restore both town and castle to the Queen-Dowager if the marriage were not accomplished within the twelve months; Louis himself entering into a similar undertaking.

All that now remained for the expectantly betrothed Queen was to take leave of her household, to distribute parting gifts amongst them, and to set out, by easy stages, on her return journey to Nantes. Her capital had been awaiting the arrival of their Duchess since May. On the 7th of that month, Du Celier, the seneschal, Gilles Thomas, and another had been chosen by the town council to make arrangements for Anne's reception, to advise

as to the gifts to be offered by the loyal citizens to their returning Duchess, and to send forward suitable deputations to know her pleasure as to such details. So prolonged were the deliberations of the worthy seneschal, and his colleagues, whose personal expenses were fixed at four and three *livres tournois*, and one golden crown, per day, that they cost the town 345 *livres tournois* for eight months.

The Queen's first halt was at Étampes. Here she and her ladies, of whom Charlotte d'Albret was one, were doubtless housed in that "lordly pleasure-house" known as "Le Séjour," built by Constance, wife of King Robert, in 977, on a site near the river, "that she might enjoy the water for her gardens."

Almost immediately after Anne's arrival, Étampes welcomed the new King of France as well.<sup>1</sup> A constant correspondence between the widow of Charles VIII. and his successor had taken the place of the frequent visits which Louis had paid to the Queen-Dowager during her sojourn in Paris after the late King's funeral. We hear of several trusty messengers, notably Plaisance the pursuivant, Phillippe de Chantenay the Queen's page, and Jean Tiercelin being sent on these missions.

The Breton Queen has not lacked apologists for her quickly dried tears for her dead husband. Are we to agree with Cherrier, that, for all that one wild streak of seeming romance, the midnight ride to Langeais, the first marriage of Anne de Bretagne was one of *convenance*, the most fugitive of all loves? Was it ambition now, flattered pride, or Bretagne, still, last as first, that moved her? Venice, at any

<sup>1</sup> About this date, Louis received a Venetian embassy at Étampes, not at the Château, as the records of the mission inform us, the Queen-Dowager being then in residence, but at the inn called de la Fontaine.

rate, had already decided her destiny, pitiless as herself for that poor, pathetic figure neither Duchess of Orléans nor Queen of France, in her loneliness at Montrichard.

On July 18, 1498, ambassadors had left the Republic armed with letters in duplicate for presentation to the Queen-Dowager—one of condolence, in case they found her still a widow, and one of congratulation, should their arrival in France coincide with the announcement of her marriage to the new King.

Matters of moment were to be decided at Étampes that summer—one, the ratification of Anne's solemn promise, made before her departure from Paris, to remain a widow, unless she might mate with a king once more; the other, more closely connected with it than at first sight would appear, taking the shape of royal letters patent, whereby, "in recognition of services rendered, and still to come," the county of Valentinois, the county of Diois, and the seigniori of Issoudun were conferred on Cesare Borgia. On August 22 Jean de Foix, Comte d'Étampes, was empowered to register the new decree, which was solemnly attested by the Parliament of Grenoble on October 6. It was not until the following November, however, that the county of Valentinois was erected into a duchy. The wits of the day declared that the honours conferred upon the ex-Cardinal of Valencia were "for the sake of the name and of the rhyme—" *Comme il avait été Cardinal de Valence en Espagne, pour le nom et la rime, on lui donne Valence en Dauphiné.*"

Was it at the moment when Louis, lifting his eyes, it may be, from that first step in the "odious alliance" which was to leave a lasting stain upon his memory, they fell upon Charlotte d'Albret at the

Queen's side, that her fate was finally decided ? Did he then, for the first time, take Anne into his confidence, pointing out to her, among the garden of girls that blossomed round her, that " *bon et vertueux personnage du royaume* " whom he had secretly designed for the bride of Cesare Borgia ? It may well have been so ; but smiling still, because still unconscious of her destiny, we see Charlotte passing on, with her royal mistress and her young companions, to Rennes, the next stage in the leisurely progress of the Queen-Duchess.

Here Du Celier, the seneschal of Nantes, the proctor of Rennes, and a bourgeois of the latter town, waited upon her, at the Château de Blain, submitting for her approval the programme for her reception, which was to be at once as stately as her dignity could demand, as decorous as her recent widowhood must needs exact.

It was not, however, until November 8 that Anne made her entry into the long-expectant town. The details of the occasion are of interest to us who know that Charlotte d'Albret was an eye-witness of the spectacle. At the gate of the Sauvetour, the Duchess was met by the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral, carrying the holy relics. A young girl, borne on a " *great beast called ung olifant*," led by two men disguised as savages, presented the keys of the town ; " *this great beast*," we are told, was carried by two men, hidden beneath draperies, and " *walked when they walked*." Anne walked under a canopy of black velvet, preceded by standards black, violet, and white with black crosses, the trumpeters being also in half-mourning.

A morris dance and morality had been performed before the arrival of the Duchess at the crossway

known as Puylois. Certain other "moralities," however, had been reserved for the entertainment of the distinguished and most welcome guest. At the Carrefour St. Jean was presented "*La Feinte de Fortune*"; at the Carrefour St. Vincent, "*La Feinte ou Mystère de Verité et de ses rapporteurs*"; a pastoral play being presented in a grove erected for the purpose, together with the "*Judgment of Paris*," "otherwise the fable of the three goddesses, Pallas, Venus, and Juno."

While the townspeople received generous supplies of wine, with which the streets ran, the town made merry, and presented gifts of welcome and homage—two silver bowls, two basins of the same, two flagons, six covered cups, or high dishes. Thus, with rejoicings throughout her duchy, Anne resumed sovereign state in Bretagne.

Leaving her to that brief assumption of authority as sole ruler once more of the land of her heart, we turn to Roman gossip of the summer of 1498, busy with astonishing rumours touching the outfit in preparation for Cesare Borgia, Cardinal no more since August 17, on which day, also, the French envoy, Louis de Villeneuve, arrived in Rome to escort the bearer of the Papal dispensation sought by Louis to France.

Sanuto prices the Borgia's outfit at 100,000 ducats, drawn, it was openly said, from the coffers of various innocent culprits, whose sole crime in the eyes of Alexander VI. and his son was that they could provide the sum required. "Clad in silk and velvet, and bedizened with gold and jewels," the diary of Sanuto further relates that he took with him fifty shirts, which cost fifty ducats each; "and this is true." A train of noble Roman gentlemen, besides several

Spaniards, attended the Papal ambassador—Pietro Santa Croce, Marco Mariano di Stefano di Francesco, Menico Sanguignio, Julio Alberino, Joan Battiste Manvino, Bartolommeo di Capranica—each of whom wore on their backs a thousand ducats' worth of finery, the fashion of their dress, we are told, being French, in compliment to Cesare's destination. John Cardona commanded the nine men at arms and numerous gentlemen who formed part of the company.

"Little was yet known," writes one of his historians, "of the character or capacity of Cesare Borgia" at this date. Certainly, his love of display, his passion for pomp, had been well in evidence ever since he had been called, still the "gallant youth" of Bernardo Castiglione, by the advent of his father to the chair of St. Peter, to take his place at the Papal court. At thirteen, the young student of Pisa bore himself like a prince, to whom ambassadors were proud to pay their court. Masquerading in Turkish costume at the side of Djem, the unhappy hostage of the Vatican, wearing his hunting-dagger or oriental scimitar with a jaunty air, Cesare Borgia takes the stage, from first to last, as magnificent as he was malign.

## CHAPTER VIII

The shadow deepens on Charlotte's path—Avignon *en fête*—Gifts for the Lord Duke.

THE passage of her fate towards Charlotte d'Albret was, mercifully, a slow one. Etiquette demanded that the Papal envoy should not reach the French court until the divorce of Jeanne de Valois had been decreed. On September 13, 1498, Alexander signed the bull giving Louis his heavily priced freedom ; on the 28th of the same month the Pope gave the King clearly to understand what he wanted in return :

*" To our well-beloved son in Christ, the most christian King of the French.*

*" I.H.S. Maria.*

*" Pope Alexander VI. with his own hand.*

" Health and the apostolic benediction to our most dear son in Christ. Anxious in all respects to accomplish your and our own desires, we destine to your Majesty our heart, that is, our favourite son, Duke Valentino, who is prized by us beyond all else, as a signal and most estimable token of our affection towards your Highness, to whom no further commendation of him is required ; and we only ask that you will so treat him, who is thus commissioned to your royal person, as that all may, for our satisfaction, perceive that in his mission he has in every respect been most acceptable to your Majesty.

" Given at St. Peter's, Rome, the 28th of September [1498]."

On October 3, Cesare left Rome for Civita Vecchia, where French galleys awaited him. From the windows of the Vatican, the Pope watched the splendid procession depart, the silver-mounted trappings of Cesare's horse, the pearl-embroidered saddle-cloths, worthy of the King their rider stood for in his infatuated, foolish father's sight.

Two days later the Consuls and Council of Avignon were solemnly debating how they might fitly receive, as the King desired, that distinguished guest who was shortly to sojourn for a few days in their midst. Funds, unfortunately, were low; it was, therefore, decided to raise a loan of 2,000 gold crowns, "in order that the Council might be in a position to make the necessary outlay, and provide the presents they wish to offer to their illustrious visitor." The loan is therefore arranged, at 7 per cent. with Messire Pons Lartesutti.

"With the advice and good will of the very Reverend Father in God, and very redoubtable Lord, Monseigneur the Cardinal of St. Peter ad Vincula, legate of this town" (Giuliano della Rovere, whose quarrel with the Pope was now at an end), "and of Monseigneur the Bishop of Mende, his nephew, governor of their town," the Consuls and Council decided that Don Cesare "shall be most honourably received by sending him an embassy to Marseilles composed of the Reverend Father in God, and most honoured Lord Monseigneur Jehan Boniface de Perussis, by the grace of God, Bishop of Lescar, with the learned, wise, and noble personages Messires Dragonet Girart, Michel de Saint Sixt, doctors, Etienne de Guyères and Oliver Sextre, burgesses, all natives of the city of Avignon, and by hanging the streets of the town from the gate of St. Lazare where he entered to the Petit Palais,

“which is the archiepiscopal lodging of this town, where the said Lord Legate, Archbishop of the same, will receive him very honourably, and in the said streets from the said gate shall be merriments and plays and stages, with divers games.” Also at his “joyful advent shall be given to the said Don Cesare a rich and beautiful gift of silver plate, and finally that no expression of joy shall be wanting, and that he shall be fêted in the Maison de la Ville (Hôtel de Ville) with ladies and beautiful girls, for the said lord, Don Cesare, takes much pleasure therein! knowing well how to entertain, dance with and entertain them. The dances are to be morris, mummeries, and other *joyeusetés*.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, there should be offered to the noble Lord a splendid and noteworthy collation of all manner of preserved fruits, the most beautiful and splendid imaginable.”

On October 12 the ambassadors named by the Council left Avignon on horseback with their suite, composed of a steward, chaplain, and twelve serving-men, taking with them provisions for the first stages of the journey, namely, 25 lb. of tunny-fish to make pasties, and 21 lb. of other salt-water fish, Saturday being a fast-day. Crossing the Durance between Cavaillon and Orgon, sleeping at the latter place, a mule carrying their luggage in a chest, swimming the river led by a man hired on the spot, two of the serving-men were sent on ahead on Monday the 14th to prepare a lodging for the travellers at Marseilles.

On Wednesday the 16th the party stopped at Salon to have several horses shod. They supped and slept at the village of Pennes. Next day they arrived in Marseilles, where they were received by Cesare, there being no details available, however,

<sup>1</sup> Junketings.

as to the manner of their reception, nor of the public fêtes held in the city during their stay. Mention is made of a golden crown presented to the trumpeters of "Monseigneur le Duc," whom we shall see a few months later "sounding their silver instruments" as they go before Cesare into Chinon. This item is set down in the accounts, which were kept (very badly) by Capitaine du Pont, the steward.

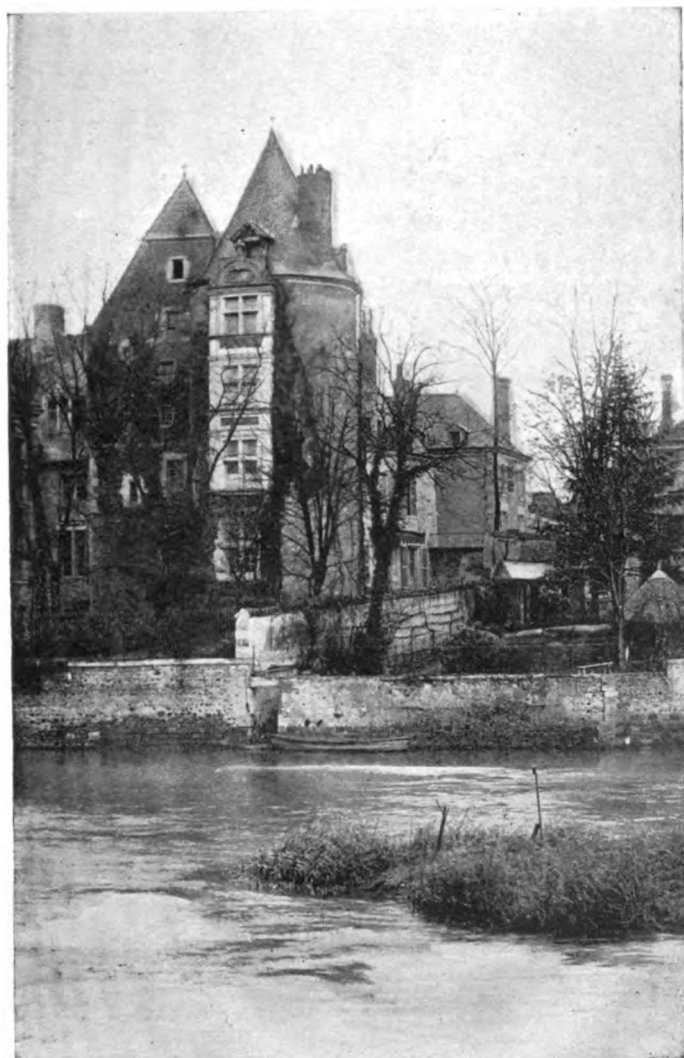
Cesare had arrived at Marseilles October 11, on a ship called *La Louise*, the Consuls having sent four galleys to meet him, on one of which was the Baron de Trans, the special envoy of the French King. On his entering the harbour, Cesare was received with a salute of artillery, and on landing he was welcomed by the Archbishop of Aix, the Comte de Sault, and many other distinguished persons, who conducted him to the Hôtel de Ville, which was richly decorated. Here the relics of St. Lazare and St. Victor were displayed. Cesare's stay at Marseilles lasted ten days, during which time he visited the Islands, and the Church of Notre Dame de la Garde. The ambassadors from Avignon accompanied him to Aix, where they remained three or four days, travelling thence by Lambex, Malemart, Cavaillon, and Caumont, to Avignon.

On October 28, the day of St. Simon and St. Jude, Cesare Borgia made his entry into the Papal city "with very great state," by the gate of St. Lazare. At a great distance from the city, a numerous assemblage of prelates and people awaited him, amongst them being the Cardinal-Legate, afterwards Pope Julius II.; Cardinal Gurck, formerly Raimond Pierre Perault, named Cardinal in 1493 by Alexander VI., on the recommendation of Charles VIII.; the Governor of Avignon, Clement de la Rovere, cousin

of the Legate ; the Bishops of Lescar and Carpentras ; the Viguiier (Provost), the Consuls (Pierre de Bisqueris, Baptiste du Pont, and François de Maelyun) ; and the magistrates ; an immense concourse of gentlemen, burghers, merchants, and others following. Never had so enthusiastic a welcome nor so splendid a cortège been seen in Avignon.

At the Porte St. Lazare, itself splendidly decorated, and turned into a triumphal arch of reed and lattice-work covered with greenery, garlands of box and ivy, twisted over with bands of gold and silver paper, the whole surmounted by the coats of arms of the Pope, the Duke, the Legate, and the Governor, Cesare was received on a dais, under a canopy of cloth of gold and silver. All the streets through which the cortège passed were strewn with sand, and hung with cloth (literally sheets, as at the present day, when the Blessed Sacrament is carried in procession through a town, the householders on the line of route hang sheets on the walls, and, sometimes, over these, garlands, or hangings of coloured stuffs), and rich tapestries. At intervals were triumphal arches, and stages on which were represented games and historical scenes.

Near the Porte St. Lazare was a fountain springing up in several jets on a stage on which was a forest with savages ; a cart-load of oaks had been fetched from the forest of Châteauneuf to furnish this scene, together with 45 lb. of moss, to "make up the savages." When these had finished playing, another troupe gave a representation of the story of the "Chaste Suzanna." Jean de la Barre, a descendant of an illustrious family of painters, painted the golden acorns, of which a large number were affixed to the trees, in compliment to the arms of the Cardinal-



**THE CHÂTEAU OF ROMORANTIN (NOW THE SUB-PRÉFECTURE).**  
From a photograph by Henri Moindrot, Romorantin.



Legate. De la Barre also composed four rondeaux—one for “Suzanna,” one for the “Shepherdess,” and two others for the “False Witnesses.” A Jewish merchant, Jesse de Loriol, hired out the costumes for “Suzanna” and the “Shepherdess”; they were of velvet and camlet, trimmed with tinsel. Two trumpeters and a tambourine player had been brought from the Island for this show.

At Belle-Croix, the Carrefour de la Carréterie, in the Rues de l'Épicerie and de la Savonnerie, and at the Carrefour du Puits des Bœufs, where there was a bonfire, there were other stages with shows, but no details of these have come down to us. The most important theatre of all was specially erected on the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville. It was built like the others, of wood and reeds covered with foliage and garlands of gold and silver paper, the leaves made of foil and tinsel. Here, as elsewhere, there were quantities of oil lamps and torches, to illuminate the scene. The play enacted here was probably a representation of the Mystery of the Nativity, judging from the following entries in the town accounts for the year 1498 :

“Have given to him who lent the calf to put on the stage, and to whom it was returned, 1 gros, 6 deniers.

“Item, to a poor man who played Joseph on the stage, 3 gros, 12 deniers.”

The calf probably represented the ox in the stable at Bethlehem, but there is no mention of the ass. A piece of music was sung by the singers of St. Agricole, who received “10 florins for their trouble.” All the theatres had been built with great care under

the direction of Jannon Imbert, le Broquier, inspector of stages and scaffoldings.

Arrived at the Porte St. Lazare, Cesare found himself preceded by a troupe of musicians, who accompanied him to the Archiepiscopal Palace, remaining in attendance on him as escort throughout his stay in the city. The usual address of welcome which it was customary to offer to great personages seems to have been omitted on this occasion, as there is no mention of it in the account from which we quote, though it alludes to what were probably the programmes of the fêtes ("tillets d'or et d'azur"), for which three sous, nine deniers were paid to Maître Louis, the scribe, and these were given to the Duke at his entrance into the town and at the collation in the Hôtel de Ville.

The day following his entry, the Consuls and all the well-to-do people of the town waited upon the Duke to pay their respects, the Assessor reciting a very fine harangue. Messire Dragonet Girardi—for so this functionary was named—had had his discourse composed for him by Maître Achate Long, regent of the municipal schools, for the sum of two crowns, of gold. In this harangue the Assessor offered the Duke the rights of the town, "in general and in particular," presenting him at the same time, in the name of his fellow citizens, with the following gifts:

Two basins in fine silver, plain, for washing the hands.

Two ewers, also in fine silver.

Twelve large cups in fine silver.

Two ewers in silver-gilt.

One large cup, gilt within and without, on the outside the twelve months of the year painted in

enamel—called also in some records the Twelve Apostles.

A large basin in silver-gilt of the fashion of Catalonia.

Two large pitchers in fine silver.

All this plate, of which the weight and several prices are given in the accounts, cost together 946 écus du Roi, or 2,957 florins of the then Avignon currency, 24,000 francs of present money. The arms of the town of Avignon were engraved on each article in enamel.

This princely offering from the town of Avignon is of interest in the light of the fact that we shall hear again of some at least of the items of which it was composed in the inventory of Charlotte d'Albret. Thus, that "large basin of the fashion of Catalonia" is recognisable surely, in the later connection, as "A large basin for washing the hands, having a great coat of arms in the centre, encircled with a wreath of leaves, a sun half-risen, and two crescent moons, risen, chased and gilt, shells below, and the beak gilt, weighing 9 marks." Many of the *couppes* and ewers, also, may be identified in that princely list of Charlotte's possessions.

On November 1, All Saints' Day, the Consuls and the Council conducted the Duke from the Petit Palais to the Hôtel de Ville, where a numerous and brilliant assemblage of ladies awaited him. Here they passed the day in dancing. The dances, we are told, were both "comic" and "morris," the comic dancers and singers being dressed in red damask covered with golden spots (sequins) that quivered as they moved. Then came the collation, at which white and red wines were served with all kinds of preserved fruit, marzipan tarts and little sugar

biscuits, dates and avelines, all preserved in sugar, besides all sorts of sugar-plums. "There must have been used," says the chronicler, "about ten quintaux," the quintal being a measure of 100 lb. After all was over, his hosts re-conducted the Lord Duke to his lodging in the Petit Palais to the sound of much singing, and with many torches.

The Hôtel de Ville in which these festivities took place was not a building made for the purpose, but a house and tower which in the fourteenth century had belonged to Cardinal d'Albano and previously to the Monastery of St. Ruf de Montpellier, and bought in 1447 by the Parliament from the Benedictines of St. Laurent. Three other houses had been added to it, and an old Chapel of St. Theodorite, which served as an arsenal. It was much blocked up by unornamental buildings, and the street leading to it was a very narrow one, called Rue de l'Herbolerie, pulled down in 1738, which led to it from the west of the central market, actually the Place de l'Horloge. Over the entrance door was a gilt niche with a statue of Our Lady, which Nicholas d'Ypre, of Lyons, had just painted in gold and blue, for the sum of forty-eight florins. The old chapel which served as arsenal was on the right, and on a line with the Hôtel de Ville.

It was from this spot that Maîtres Jean Meyre and Huguet, bombardiers, brought out daily the artillery which was fired off in honour of "my Lord the Duke." A little court surrounded the tower, called Tour de Jacquemart. On the ground floor was a chapel where Mass was said daily by a member of one of the four Orders of Mendicant Friars, and on the third floor the archives of the city were stored.

The Hôtel d'Albano had but one story, the ground

floor being divided into two halls, called *salles basses*, or lower rooms. They were furnished with forms with backs to them, in walnut wood, covered with red cloth embroidered with the arms of the town. These tapestries, ornamented with allegorical designs and figures of men and animals, or coats of arms, are called *banquiers* in old deeds. It was here that the Parliament of Avignon met. The upper room, or Salle Haute, was reserved for festivities. The walls were covered with tapestries left to the town by the Cardinal de Foix, representing scenes of the chase and knightly deeds. Torch-holders of gilded wood in the shape of arms surrounded this hall, and it was paved with glazed Spanish bricks (tiles?). On the side next the Abbey of St. Laurent was another room, called the Salle des Marchands, probably the exchange and mart of the day.

For Cesare's reception the front of the Hôtel de Ville had been made brilliant with new paint, the panels with the arms of the Pope, the Duke, the Cardinal-Legate, and the Governor. The walls of the Cour d'Honneur disappeared beneath garlands and wreaths of box and ivy sprinkled with gold and silver leaves. Arbours had been put in the court also, and it was lit by a number of small tables furnished with aromatised candles. The forms had been removed from the lower rooms to make room for the tables for the feast, and both apartments had been newly decorated for the occasion by several of the town-painters. It was in the upper rooms that the dancing took place.

There must have been a great number of guests at the banquet, judging from the preparations. Mention is made of six dozen glasses, of twelve large ewers, of six barrels of red wine, and forty-two

of white. But of course the crowd of trumpeters, musicians, town-messengers, and major-domos, who kept the doors in heralds' doublets, "were thirsty souls."

The good things with which the tables groaned seem to have been all bought at the apothecary's, one, Paul de Sandro, who also provided, for ten florins, thirty torches to illuminate the Rue de l'Herbolerie. The feast cost 330 florins, 16 sous, 6 deniers. The Master of the Revels seems to have been one Maître Petit-Jean, a shoemaker, who appears to have been the official "joker" of the town. There is a long list in the accounts of various items supplied to the dancers and other entertainers. The morris dance, which was usually performed by men, was, we learn, in this instance, danced by girls, at the suggestion of the Archbishops (!) for Cesare's benefit, "as he was known to prefer it"!

## CHAPTER IX

Pageant and pillory—The Duchesse de Berry—Louis gives a saint to France—Cesare comes to Chinon—Scorn of the Princesse de Tarente—The King of France rides post-haste to Nantes—A twice-crowned Queen.

ON November 7, 1498, Cesare bade adieu to his princely entertainers at Avignon, and set forth on his royal progress towards Chinon. Strange and cruel contrast more than one chronicler has perceived in that sovereign pomp and glittering train to the long agony which was coincident with its splendour to Jeanne de Valois, pilloried, in the sight of all France, as the price of "secular magnificence" for this jewelled Duke of a day.

Nature, at least, would have neither act nor part in the scandal or the tragedy. Perverse as she often is, to the point of malice in the setting which she assigns to human epochs and events, granting to the day of death a sunshine and a sweetness which she too often denies to the bridal hour, for once she flung her shuttle fitly. For we read in the journal of that painstaking monastic meteorologist, Benôit Maillard, Prior of Savigny, that the autumn which brought the Valentinois to France was cold and stormy. Tempests fiercer than any which had ever raged within living memory devastated the Lyonnais, as background for those scenes of feasting and merriment in which a light-hearted southern popula-

tion welcomed their illustrious guest; as though the elements themselves, in sinister sympathy, it may have been, with the bedizened condottiere, whose after career was to have something in common with their lurid wildness—or, perhaps, in stern protest against the infamous errand on which he was bound—cried out in flood, and hail, and thunder, and lightning, on his passing and his progress.

In storm and tempest, also on December 17, 1498, the decree of the tribunal was pronounced which set the first fleuron in the crown of saintship of Jeanne de Valois. She was Queen no more, she who had never borne the title; henceforth she is "the good and very dear cousin" of His Most Christian Majesty; Duchesse de Berry, "for the good of the kingdom."

With weird accompaniment of howling winds, crashing thunder, and terrifying lightning, flare of torches, and ominous outcries of the crowd that filled the Church of St. Denis at Amboise, Jeanne's doom was sealed. With her princely dowry and her new title, she passed into the keeping of her faithful "Berry, where her name will live, as long as time, for her good deeds and her perfect charity."

She had gone before Charlotte d'Albret (unwitting of the moment when she would need that consolation) to await her coming.

"On Wednesday, the 18th of December, 1498," writes M. Edmond Bonaffé, at the opening of his "Inventaire de la Duchesse de Valentinois" (a volume to which we shall have occasion to return again and again, with as much gratitude as fascination, if the history of Charlotte d'Albret is to be told at all), "the little town of Chinon was *en fête*."

Let us take our stand, more than four centuries after, at the side of that prince of gossips and forager

amongst old-time happenings, Brantôme, together with the unknown writer of that extract from the papers of Machiavelli in the Palatine Library of Florence, and see for what cause. It is the coming for our Charlotte, of her "fated, fairy prince." With slow, and "more than imperial state," as the Genoese ambassadors, Carlo Spinola, and Franco Giustiani, write to the ducal commissary, Agostino Adorni, Cesare had journeyed from Avignon, the gay and generous, long to keep in memory the "great pomp of his apparel and of his train," timing his arrival not to antedate the final act of the divorce proceedings at Tours.

Now, at length, climbing upwards from the sparkling waters of the Vienne, winding on its silvery way through a plain rich with the treasures of a vigorous vegetation, its slopes covered with vineyards and thick with clustering walnut-trees, he had come, as the traveller may still come to-day, finding little of the setting changed, within sight of the "gray little town"

"Of great renown,  
An old town . . .  
There's the Vienne, if you look down,  
If you look up, there's the wood."

Had he eyes, then, or at any moment, "panting," as he ever was, for temporal greatness, for any beauty that could not be cajoled or compelled into ministering to his vanity or adorning his person? What was it to him that he stood on the threshold of Chinon, the storied, of the fourfold fortress, save as it might serve for background to his overweening pride, his passion for the pageantry of his era?

And, if the records of that often-quoted princely procession are more than legend, Cesare Borgia in

the dust has such triumph as he loved the best while we turn the gem-strewn pages that preserve it.

It is said<sup>1</sup> that "the worried officials at the French court," who "could find no mention in their treatises on etiquette of the reception proper to a Pope's son," had got over the difficulty "without suppressing the gorgeous entry which it was well known the Borgia had prepared for himself and his suite," by arranging for the King to go hunting with his court, and to meet Cesare, as though by accident, "some miles outside the town." But how then are we to place Louis and his courtiers where Brantôme points them out to us, watching the approach of the procession from the castle windows, "making merry, at the expense of the newly fledged Duke, over his bombastic vainglory?" Or how account for the Italian chronicler's statement that "the King met Cesare at the head of the staircase of his castle?"

"Upon the bridge," no doubt, Georges d'Amboise, to be Cardinal de Rouen on the morrow, was ready to receive him, "heading the procession from thence to the castle entrance." For the "old, rhymed version" to which Brantôme acknowledges his indebtedness places d'Amboise amongst the "several lords and gentlemen of the court who went before the Duke," others being M. de Ravestan, M. le Senéchal de Toulouse, and M. de Clérieux, the intimate friend of the King, and much in touch with Federigo of Naples. First, came a lengthy train of sumpter-mules, the mule being "a beast much used in France," says Cotgrave, "for the carriage of sumpters." Brantôme describes the trappings of

<sup>1</sup> Writes Mr. Theodore Cook in his "Old Touraine."

these animals as having been all of red and yellow. The Italian account, however, states that forty were covered with these two colours, out of compliment to the French royal liveries, thirteen being caparisoned with crimson and yellow, and eight with violet and yellow. All the trappings of the sumpter-mules bore on embroidered escutcheons the arms of the Duke, and were laden with *bahuts*, coffers, and *bouges*, making up the sum total of the ducal luggage.<sup>1</sup>

After the sumpter-mules came twelve jennets, with silver bridles and cockades of gold, Spanish fashion, to which Cesare remained faithful throughout his life, never forgetting that he was Borja of Valencia. These jennets carried as many gentlemen, in doublets of velvet and brocade, their harness making merry music as they passed, decked as it was with little jingling silver bells. Twenty pages followed, on as many horses, in crimson velvet embroidered doublets and caps, though two of their number were in cloth of gold, the bystanders questioning why these minions were so much finer than the rest.

Among the sixty gentlemen who came after, in doublets of black velvet and collars of gold, was Giovanni, of the noble Roman House of the Orsini.

<sup>1</sup> The *bahut* was a kind of chest, with either a flat or a convex top, resting on feet, and opening on the upper side, serving when empty for seats. More than one of these *bahuts* of Cesare's found their way to La Motte Feuilly, the last home of Charlotte d'Albret, where we shall find one containing bed-linen, and the other assigned to the use of Catherine Chaloppin, her *femme de chambre*. One at least of the coverings may be easily identified in the list of household goods at La Motte Feuilly, as "une couverture de coffre à bahut, bandée de drap rouge et jaune." The *malle*, says M. Viollet-le-duc, always accompanied the *bahut*, being a little pack, fastened with leather straps. The *bouge* was a sort of leather case, corresponding, probably, to our modern portmanteau.

Next came more *bahuts*, over two of which were flung coverings of cloth of gold. On these, Brantôme tells us, the eyes of the dazzled spectators were fixed in almost awestruck curiosity, speculation being rife as to the contents of these notable coffers. Jewels, it was hazarded, for the destined bride (still in doubt), who was to be Duchesse de Valentinois ; or, it might be, the dispensation for the King's marriage with the Queen-Dowager. Now appeared thirty more gentlemen, in cloth of gold and silver ; " too small a troop," the crowd objected—" there should have been at least 100, to match all the magnificence that had already passed by."

Immediately preceding the Duke himself came eight trumpeters, clad in velvet, also eighteen grooms, wearing short cloaks of velvet. There were also tabourers, in cloth of gold, after the fashion of their country, the instruments on which they played being probably the " tabourin de basque," a small shallow drum, open at one end, and having numerous small bells attached, which, together with " other jingling knacks, were wont to make, in the ears of children and silly people, a pretty noise." Three more musicians performed on the rebec, a favourite instrument of the time. " Rebec," says Cotgrave, " an instrument of music, having catgut strings, and played with a bow, originally with only two strings, then with three, until it was exalted into the more perfect violin." The Borgia's rebec-players had twined chains of gold and cords of silver round their instruments for this auspicious occasion. All these makers of merry music " went before the Duke, playing incessantly."

As for the Duke himself, never before, or since, has Chinon welcomed so gorgeous, if goodlier, a knight.

Let us lean closer, elbowing our way through that gaping French crowd of long ago, that we, too, may have our fill of gazing ; for, though Charlotte d'Albret does not watch with us, or with King Louis and his court at the castle windows that tower above the steep, narrow street, yet, as he came, she would have had him enter her life ; for it is always a prince that comes to seek a bride.

Mounted on a great courser, richly caparisoned with crimson and cloth of gold, studded with many and various kinds of gems, " a great and natural-looking artichoke of gold " on the crupper, and its tail adorned with great pearls and other most beautiful jewels, the Duke was a resplendent figure. We pause to remember that we shall hear of the famous artichoke once more, " un chardon d'or, émaillé de vert et rouge," in the list of the treasures of Madame la Duchesse de Valentinois.

Cesare was clad in the French fashion, as we learn ; a doublet of black velvet, with wide sleeves, buttoned with twelve gold buttons, in the centre of each a great balas ruby. On his breast was an exquisite hand-mirror, set with diamonds of great value, the handle edged with huge pearls.

In his velvet beret Cesare wore a pearl as large as an acorn, and round the turned-up edge several large pearls ; his boots were of velvet, laced with gold cords, and embroidered with pearls.

On the following morning, after Mass, at which the ex-Cardinal appeared in a Spanish cloak of black velvet, lined with blue, and adorned with loops of gold cord, and wearing a collar of gold, set with great rubies, of which the rhyme says,

" Et un collier pour dire le cas,  
Qui valait bien trente mille ducats,"

Georges d'Amboise, first to receive his share of the Papal benefactions, was solemnly invested with the Red Hat. He was now more than ever committed to the common cause of Louis and the Duke. We shall see him from this moment the chief factor in the Borgia-d'Albret alliance. For it is more than probable that d'Amboise from the first was in his royal master's confidence in the matter, and shared the latter's secret determination to find a wife indeed for the Pope's son, even a kinswoman of his own—any wife, in short, save Charlotte of Aragon. Thus, it would be long before the February in which the daughter of the Sire d'Albret began to be spoken of as a possible Duchesse de Valentinois, that d'Amboise would begin to look around him for likely tools whom he might secure betimes to forward the King's intentions. He would find them, as we shall see, in Jean de Calvimont, Seigneur de l'Herm, de Tursac, of the noble House of the same name, and in Simon de la Romagière, the Sire d'Albret's right hand man in Paris, but no less, as M. Maulde de la Clavière reminds us, in his "Life of Louise de Savoie and d'Angoulême," in that grey-eyed Countess of the chestnut hair who was a great lady at court, in spite of the friction which existed between herself and Anne de Bretagne; mother of the heir to the throne, afterwards François I., and the good and intimate friend, strange as the bond must seem, of Charlotte d'Albret.

The superb arrogance and indomitable self-esteem of Cesare Borgia had not permitted him to doubt for an instant that he would find awaiting him at the French court, in return for the coveted Hat which he brought to Georges d'Amboise and the freedom which he was to bestow upon the perjured

husband of Jeanne de Valois, an inevitable, if unwilling, bride. Alexander VI. held the French King's written promise to arrange the marriage of his idolised son with Charlotte de Tarente—a promise contained in a secret document brought to light amongst the d'Albret papers at Pau. Its discovery in the archives of the family to which Cesare's eventual bride belonged gives rise to curious reflections. How did it come into the possession of the d'Albrets? Did the Sire d'Albret obtain it by some undisclosed trick, and if so, to what purpose? The answer may be found in the provisions of the agreement itself. All that Louis XII. promised to the Pope's son, in the event of his marriage with the one Charlotte, was actually fulfilled, though another was substituted for the original. And when it is seen, moreover, that, with the exception of this substitution, the contract remained the same in all respects, it is clear that Alain d'Albret would have spared no pains to obtain possession of the document, and to assure himself, by its perusal, that no advantage which might have accrued to Aragon from the Borgia alliance should be withheld now that there was question of d'Albret.

Cesare had but newly parted, moreover, in his city of Avignon, from Giuliano della Rovere, who was heart and soul on the Borgia side in the matrimonial negotiations. King and Cardinal surely would suffice, should obstacles arise, to over-ride all that threatened to wreck the fair fabric which Cesare and his father had set their heart on rearing out of the ancient spell which Aragon had cast over Borja.

But speedy disillusionment and rude shock to his vanity met Cesare on the very threshold of his famous entry into Chinon. The Princesse de Tarente,

with her heart already in the keeping of Nicolas de Laval, whom she was shortly afterwards to marry, strong, moreover, in the sympathy and support of Anne de Bretagne, who could be counted upon to bestow cordial favour on the suit of a Breton gentleman, presented a pitiless though passive scorn to all the Borgia blandishments.

That "magnetic attraction for women" which Cesare had inherited from his father only met with stubborn resistance and obstinate repulse from Charlotte of Tarentum.

Nor was pressure brought to bear on her from Naples, though her inflexible attitude was to cost Federigo his kingdom and his crown. Very early in the progress of the tangled negotiations, which have been preserved to us in countless diaries and other documents of the period, the King of Naples had declared that, in spite of "the unbearable anxieties" which the matter had cost him, he was prepared to part, nevertheless, with his state, his children, nay, with life itself, sooner than bring himself to give his consent to a marriage "so unsuitable and contrary to all reason." "For it seems to me," said the King to one of the ambassadors who were commissioned to discuss the matter with him, "that the son of a Pope, who is also a Cardinal, is not a fitting husband for my daughter. Let it be ordained, however," he added, "that a Cardinal may enter into the state of wedlock; then, he may keep his hat, and I will, notwithstanding, give him my daughter."

Besides her father's repugnance, Charlotte of Aragon had the sympathetic support of M. de Clérieux, who paid for his rash championship of her cause, in spite of being the intimate friend of the King, with his banishment from court.



**ANNE OF BRITTANY.**

By kind permission of the authorities of the British Museum.



**REPUTED PORTRAIT OF CESARE BORGIA.**

By kind permission of the authorities of the British Museum.



In Rome, with an obstinacy that matched that of Charlotte, the Pope, though threatened at home by Spain, and set at defiance by Germany, greatly perturbed, moreover, by the prospect of an imminent Franco-Venetian alliance, clung the more doggedly to the Aragonese marriage, calling now Ascanio Sforza, now the more distant Cardinal-Legate of Avignon, to his aid. But the former, making common cause with his brother, Ludovico, and desirous, above all things, to prevent any *rapprochement* between the Borgia and Naples, gave the Pope to understand that it was useless to attempt to overcome the determination of Federigo and his daughter, who were united in their aversion to the match sought to be imposed on them by the French King. From della Rovere the news was not much more reassuring, though, to soothe the Pontiff's wounded vanity, the Legate added that perhaps this check to the hopes of his Holiness was by operation of the Divine Will, which was thus reserving for the Duke a still more advantageous alliance. The Cardinal's letter was dated the same day, in fact, on which Louis renewed his promise to find a suitable bride for Cesare.

The King's own matrimonial concerns at this juncture naturally took precedence, however, of his illustrious guests. Scarcely had Louis welcomed Cesare at Chinon, when, armed with the dispensation granted to him by Louis, Bishop of Albi, in virtue of rights conveyed to him by the Papal legate, to celebrate his marriage with Anne de Bretagne in any place or church within the duchy, her impatient lover set out for Nantes. Here, the Queen-Dowager awaited him with the calm though flattered complacency of a woman no longer forced at the point

of the sword to submit to a marriage imposed upon her by the will of a suzerain, but her own mistress, to be sought and won on her own territory. Louis entered Nantes under a canopy of blue velvet, embroidered with escutcheons at the four corners, two of France and two of Bretagne. On January 7 the marriage contract was signed at the Château, and on the following day the actual ceremony was performed at the same place by Yves de Quirissec.

Under the spell of his honeymoon happiness, Cesare seems to have passed as utterly from his mind for awhile as the poor discredited exile of Bourges.

## CHAPTER X

The Duc de Valentino in the sulks—Threatened Spanish alliance—  
Another Charlotte is proposed as his bride—A lily in the shade  
—Scruples and statecraft—Jean Calvimont and Simon de la  
Romagère—A delicate question—The Sire d'Albret bargains—  
He yields—The contract signed.

FOR reasons of his own, however, Louis seems to have made at least an outward show of "sparing no pains to bring about the marriage" so ardently desired by Alexander and his son, "employing," it is said, both "kindness and threats" towards that end. But not even the final threat of being banished from the court could shake the firm resolve of the Princesse de Tarente not to "give her hand to one tainted by sacrilege and fratricide." All this the Bishop of Malfi wrote to his Holiness, adding that the Bishop of Cete had, in his opinion, managed the whole affair very badly. But there can be little doubt that it was Anne de Bretagne (won over, all Bretonne as she was, to the side of the obstinate Charlotte of Aragon, by the latter's preference for a Breton gentleman) who proved the power behind the throne.

Two noble ladies still remained, when the Princesse de Tarente had been finally eliminated, to be offered in turn to the rebuffed and affronted suitor. Anne de Candale, of the House of Foix, was "reserved," however, "for still more exalted destinies." There remained Charlotte d'Albret.

The Sire d'Albret's reply to the King's proposals

on behalf of his daughter was a prompt and unqualified refusal to bestow her hand on the suggested bridegroom. Rumour of the court, which was heartily in sympathy with the new matrimonial proposition, had it that this other Charlotte shrank no less than King Federigo's daughter from the honour which Louis was so anxious to bestow upon her. She was at the mercy, however, of a less sympathetic father than Federigo of Naples; it was in her hands, also, to give peace and security to her brother and sister-in-law's sorely tried little kingdom of Navarre, racked and ravaged as it had been for more than eighteen years by fears and fighting.

No helpless creature ever sold into a shameful captivity for political reasons deserves the taunt less which has sometimes been flung at Charlotte d'Albret, that she consented, of her own free will, to become the wife of Cesare Borgia because she was "a less scrupulous princess" than Charlotte of Aragon. Even had she thus freely given her consent, it would still have remained, as a chivalrous French historian has declared, "a veritable crime, to have abandoned to the most corrupt of Italian princes a young girl of such beauty, such piety, and such sweetness."

Cesare and the Pope were no less annoyed than Louis himself by this second check to the anticipated French alliance. The Duke, it was said, was "in a labyrinth, and very displeased." As for the Pope, he declared that he "had been made a laughing-stock, all Europe being very well aware that, but for the French King's plain promise to find a wife for him, Cesare would have remained in Italy." Finding the situation intolerable, the latter announced his imminent departure from the French court in

company with the Baron de Trans, their ostensible destination being Provence ; though it was rumoured that the ex-Cardinal was actually intending to return to Rome, and resume the purple. It was plain that, if Louis still had hopes of a successful expedition into Italy, both Alexander and his son must not only be restored to good humour, but thus dealt with promptly.

To Cesare, near at hand, in order to detain him more securely at the court of which he threatened to take leave, the King allotted a lodging therein, together with an augmented guard of franc-archers.

A solemn embassy of obedience was despatched to Rome, composed of the Bishops of Lisieux, Famagusta, and Treguier, together with Girault d'Ancézune the royal treasurer, and Antonio Taccard the royal secretary ; yet, in spite of all their protestations, on their master's behalf, of " true, pure, and entire filial obedience " to the Holy See, the Pope himself " felt less sure than ever of the conclusion of the marriage." It soon became evident to Louis and to his minister, the Cardinal de Rouen, that pressure must be brought to bear on the Sire d'Albret.

D'Amboise could certainly count on Simon de la Romagière, and through him, on Jean de Calvimont, who had been sent to Paris by the Sire d'Albret to explain to his suzerain his reasons for his refusal to allow the betrothal of his daughter to take place. Once in the capital, de Calvimont, shrewd lawyer and vassal of d'Albret though he was, was soon won over to the side of those who were manœuvring the marriage by the promise of office in the Parliament of Bordeaux.

In the Queen's household, d'Amboise could count on yet another ally. Jacques de Beaune, afterwards the ill-fated lord of Semblançay, keeper of Anne de

Bretagne's privy purse, her confidential friend and adviser, was no less the intimate friend of Alain d'Albret, with whom he had long been on excellent terms. He, no less than Simon de la Romagière, had a share, though a secondary one, in the "delicate matter" of the Valentinois-d'Albret marriage, for it was he who, when a hitch threatened, stood surety for a quarter of the bride's dowry.

Louis now sends urgent letters to Nérac, impressing upon the Sire d'Albret the advisability of reconsidering his first too hasty decision. The royal intermediaries are charged to "remonstrate with and implore" Alain, his son, and daughter-in-law, the sovereigns of Navarre, to reflect gravely upon the honour which the King designs to bestow upon "her of Labret," as the contemporary diplomatic correspondence between France and Italy styles her.

"If they will but fall in with and consent to the said marriage, they will be conferring on both the King and the Queen a pleasure and a favour which the royal couple would never forget, they, on their part, being prepared to receive and welcome Mademoiselle d'Albret at court as though she were their own daughter, or the princess which they intend to make of her."

And now Alain assumes the rôle which he will play to such perfection. His first step is to pose as the tender and scrupulous parent, and, no less, as the head of an ancient and noble family, whose pride and honour must be respected and safeguarded. Out of the great world as he is, he has heard of the earlier efforts to find a wife for the Duc de Valentinois, and of the other Charlotte's unyielding repugnance to the match into which the policy of kings was endeavouring to hurry her. Is his daughter of less

account than her namesake ? If Charlotte of Aragon is a king's daughter, is not Charlotte d'Albret sister to a king ? Promises, even made by princes, were not enough for this practised driver of hard bargains. A daughter's place at the French court might seem a dazzling destiny to some honest gentleman of lower rank than d'Albret, but for a princess of that ancient House, now bound by the bond of blood to a throne, it was, after all, the place which she, no less than the daughter of Federigo of Aragon, was entitled to fill.

While not unmindful of the good-will of his suzerains towards him, nor of the parental patronage which they purpose extending to his child, yet a father must be permitted to hesitate, where there is question of her happiness, in the face of certain grave doubts suggested by the fact that the proffered bridegroom had so recently renounced a Cardinal's Hat. Under the circumstances, surely he is not asking too much to see and handle the dispensation which he is given to understand the Pope has granted to his son, in order that he may be free to enter the state of wedlock ?

Sight and touch of the document in question are promptly granted him. But still the Sire d'Albret hesitates. It is not to be for a moment supposed that his hesitation was due to any tearful entreaties, any girlish shrinking on the part of the hapless victim herself. Nowhere throughout the prolonged interchange of letters between Paris and Nérac is a glimpse of Charlotte d'Albret herself forthcoming. Like her future bridegroom's sister, Lucrezia, she must sit and smile, while her life, her happiness, her honour, are disposed of at the will of those whose chattel she is. Like Lucrezia Borgia ! The page that bears the name of Charlotte d'Albret cries out at the insult. For, although drawn within the fatal

circle of the Borgia family, "the ruin of all that came in contact with it," what sisterhood can we claim for Charlotte d'Albret with Madonna Lucrezia?

If the chroniclers who have succumbed to the spell of the daughter of Vanozza are in the seat of the righteous judges, then, indeed, both were pawns in a game at which they were scarcely permitted to look on. But here all possible parallel ends. For when all is said that may be, when one has listened, standing midway between the two camps, hostile and friendly, into which it was the lot of the Borgia to divide all who ever approached them, to the fulsome panegyrics that strive across the centuries to drown the thunders of stern accusation that storm the name of Lucrezia, it is good to remember that none have ever dared to raise an impious hand to pluck from the white brows of the Gascon princess the lilies which her pure life had the undisputed right to quarter.

Lucrezia Borgia stands always in the sun, which she wooed with cunning arts to abide for ever tangled in the meshes of her jewelled hair—in the sun, though it strikes beyond her slender, girlish figure at that sea of blood in which her dancing feet seem still planted, the sea through which she waded, with her childlike smile, from one bridal to another.

Her sister-in-law stands in marble, as we shall see her when we take our last farewell—not, indeed, because its cold hardness speaks in any sense the truth of her who was most worthy to be thus enshrined; but because, rather, the sculptor, Grief, biting with his chisel deep into that noble heart before he broke it, won the right to carve her virtues in imperishable substance.

It is but fair to point out that the document which

may well stand for sign and seal of her worse estate than that of slavery, is not altogether silent concerning the obvious graces of "high and mighty Monseigneur d'Albret's daughter." It is no mere figure of fulsome or conventional speech that acclaims the "praiseworthy and commendable good qualities which reside in the person of Mademoiselle Charlotte d'Albret." Witnesses throng from every quarter to those qualities. They had been better matched with those of some honest gentleman of Béarn or Gascony.

Having won all along the line, the Sire d'Albret now despatches his proxies, his son, Gabriel, Seigneur d'Avesnes, Messire Regnault de St. Chamans, seneschal of the Landes and the King's chief maître d'hôtel, together with Jean de Calvimont, "to treat for, agree to, and conclude the marriage proposed by the King between the Duc de Valentinois and his daughter, Charlotte d'Albret."

The fluctuations and fears which attended the conclusion of the negotiations must have given some concern to Anne de Bretagne, who had thrown herself as whole-heartedly into her husband's project for sacrificing the one Charlotte as she had violently opposed that of the other. The French Queen was at Montils-sur-Blois on April 25, when she signed the letters patent granting the foundation of the Hospital of Nantes to the Preaching Friars; though whether she was in residence at the ancient château of Thibault the Great, or at the little manor-house of Savonnières, belonging to Dunois, and sung by Duc Charles d'Orléans, is in doubt. Here, however, she must have heard that the Sire d'Albret had finally yielded to the pressure from court.

All indeed seemed to be going as smoothly as King, Queen, or expectant bridegroom could desire, when

difficulties cropped up concerning the question of the dowry, threatening further delays. To do the Sire d'Albret justice, scrutiny and scruple appear, in this respect at least, to be inspired by the most praiseworthy motives. The insatiable avarice of the man leaps out, at first, it is true, in barefaced fashion, as he begins to see his way, more and more clearly, to reaping substantial profit from this ugly bargain. He insists, in the first place, that the dowry of 100,000 lire guaranteed to Cesare should be converted into ducats; also that a date should be fixed for the payment of the same. He himself undertakes to settle 30,000 *livres tournois* on his daughter (who had previously inherited from her mother 3,000 *livres* "to help her to marry"), Charlotte on her part renouncing for herself and her heirs all rights to the succession of Françoise de Bretagne; 6,000 *livres* is to be paid cash down by the Sire d'Albret, the remainder by annual instalments.

The representatives of the Duc de Valentinois and the King alike find Cesare's future father-in-law's demands excessive; and eventually Alain is forced to yield the point of the conversion of the lire. On that of the date of payment of the dowry, however, he continues obdurate, knowing well that the game is practically in his own hands. Louis, eager to have this troublesome affair settled once for all, issues commands to the four ministers of finance, comptrollers of the royal revenues, Michel Gaillard, Pierre Briçonnet, Thomas Bohier, and Jacques de Beaune, to guarantee, in his name, the required sum. As Cesare Borgia had renounced, with the Cardinal's Hat, benefices which brought him in a revenue of 35,000 florins, it may be pointed out that it was absolutely necessary for him to recoup his fortunes

by means of a wealthy bride. Charlotte's dowry was, therefore, essential to the accomplishment of the marriage.

Alain d'Albret is the prudent parent to the end of the negotiations. He stipulates that the money settled on his daughter is not to be squandered at her own sweet will, but expended in the purchase of an estate whereon she may reside during her husband's absence in Italy. From that purpose, indeed, he never allowed her to depart, for in 1504 we find her signing a declaration at the Châtelet in the presence of her kinsman, Jacques d'Estouteville, whereby she acquits both her husband and her father of all responsibility in the matter should she fail to carry out this undertaking.

Finally, the Sire d'Albret demands a Cardinal's Hat for his scapegrace darling, Amanieu, boldly exacting, moreover, that his sister's marriage should follow, and not precede, the conferring of the dignity in question, and the public proclamation of the creation of the new Cardinal.

Even in the sordid gallery of worthless men for whom the purest and noblest women had been deliberately sacrificed, for no other crime than the misfortune of being akin, Amanieu d'Albret cuts but a sorry figure. It is a far cry from this effeminate spendthrift, the Sire d'Albret's prodigal son, to his knightly namesake and ancestor, Amanieu of the hundred lances, who bore them to the service of the Black Prince. M. Luchaire paints him for us, frittering away his life, "*dissipateur et étourdi*," in his châteaux of Brantôme and Montignac, with his flute, his falcons, and his flirtations, always hard up and harassed on all sides by impatient creditors, a luxurious wastrel to whom economy was impossible

of attainment ; flinging down his accumulated debts, when the burden became too heavy for his delicate shoulders to bear, on the paternal threshold, with the same careless unconcern with which he bequeathed his bastard children, at his death, to the father who had so frequently to pledge his plate and other valuables to redeem his darling's credit.

Amanieu d'Albret received the Cardinal's Hat bought by his sister's hand on March 15, 1500, together with the bishoprics of Oloron and Lescar. It is satisfactory to know that his relationship to the Pope's son earned him no exemption from the penalty of being a Cardinal in the pontificate of Alexander VI., for his name appears in the tax-list of the Sacred College in the year of his creation as paying 200 ducats tax on his revenue of 2,000 ducats to the Borgia family coffers, under the cloak of subsidising a new Crusade.

If Charlotte d'Albret went to Cesare Borgia an unwilling bride, as well may be, it is some poor satisfaction at least to be in no doubt as to the reception which she found awaiting her at the French court. It was so long since nothing had been talked about there save the marriage prospects of the Duc de Valentinois ; since Anne de Bretagne's schooled and stately garden of girls had rippled with surmise and speculation as to the chances, now of one, now of another, noble demoiselle. Nor was the babel of idle voices hushed, we may be sure, as the chosen bride, the centre and climax of expectation, drew near. "At this moment," writes Messire Antonio Loredan, the Venetian ambassador, on May 6, 1499, "the Duke of Bourbon and the daughter of my Lord of d'Albret are expected at Blois to celebrate her marriage with the Pope's son."

Anne de Bretagne, expert and punctilious in marriage etiquette, would have taken care, we may be well assured, that the young bride should be provided with as noble an escort as her rank and prospective state required. The necessity for such an escort, however, suggesting as it does that she was actually summoned from a distance to meet her fate, confronts us with a perplexing possibility. For the first time in her history there seems cause here to doubt the generally accepted theory of her having been brought up at the court of Anne, and colour lent, rather, to that other theory, sometimes advanced, of her having known no court, prior to her marriage, save that of Jeanne de Valois, if indeed the mean household and humble retinue allotted to that unfortunate princess before she became Duchesse de Berry were worthy of the name. Certainly, it seems more in accordance with reasonable probability that Charlotte, when necessity arose, should have turned, in her hour of dereliction, to no stranger, but to one who "had a special affection for her," and of whom she had "learned virtue."

Nevertheless, the perplexity keeps with us as we watch the travellers approaching Blois. Was it from the home of the bride's childhood, from Nérac of "the fair waters," that they had set out on their journey? Or from the court of Navarre? Or merely from Paris? We must content ourselves with the satisfaction of the thought that at least Charlotte did not go lonely to the supreme crisis of her life. The Sire d'Albret, indeed, for reasons of his own—may it not have been his conscience that forbade?—declined, we are told, to attend the ceremony, and there is no mention of his eldest daughter, the Princesse de Chimay, being present. There was a woman,

and a friend, however, at Charlotte's side, though the lady's style and title are nowhere to be traced in the genealogies of the great families of France. The ambassador's correspondence of the period, nevertheless, relates that, on the appointed day, Mademoiselle d'Albret duly arrived at the Château of Blois, accompanied " (the Duc de Bourbon being delayed on the road by the gout) by her friend, the Duchesse de Rames."

There is no mention in the Doat MSS., which contain much that is of interest and importance appertaining to the d'Albret family, of a Duke or Duchess of *Rames*. There is, however, a family of that name contemporary with the d'Albrets and Borgias of the period.

The "friend" who attended Charlotte to Blois was more probably Louise de Bourbon, wife of Louis de Bourbon, Prince de la Roche-sur-Yon, afterwards to be the neighbour and the debtor of the Duchesse de Valentinois, when resident at La Motte Feuilly. Louise de Bourbon was a kinswoman of Charlotte, whose grandmother, Isabelle de la Tour, was the elder sister of Gabrielle de la Tour d'Auvergne, grandmother of Louis de Bourbon, and whose first husband had been André de Chauvigny, Baron de Châteauroux.

Accepting this solution of the identity of Charlotte's chaperone on the occasion of her marriage, may it not be somewhat more than mere coincidence to find amongst the jewels which overflowed the ivory caskets of the Duchesse de Valentinois, two ornaments which seem to suggest the bridal gifts to her of Louis and Louise de Bourbon—that shoulder-knot, in the first place, of sixteen cabochon rubies in the shape of two L's, and that pendant of the

same device attached to a carcanet "à roulets," one of black enamel alternating with one of gold"?

THE MARRIAGE CONTRACT BETWEEN CESARE BORGIA DUC DE VALENTINOIS AND DE DIOIS, AND CHARLOTTE D'ALBRET

To all those to whom these presents shall come, Denis Audoux, licentiate in law, counsellor of our Lord the King, judge ordinary and warden of the provostship and province of Issoudun for the said Lord, Greeting, be it known that this day, the date of these presents, we have considered and examined, seen and read, word by word, certain letters written on parchment sealed in duplicate and green wax, neither irregular, defective, nor cancelled, but perfectly in order as to sign, seal, date, and writing, as appears to us on the face of them, the purport of the said letters being as follows: To all those to whom these presents shall come, Guillaume Blondet, licentiate in law, bailiff of Blois, for MM. the deans and Chapter of St. Saviour of Blois, within the jurisdiction which they have in the town and outskirts of the said place during the three days after the Ascension of Our Lord, Greeting, be it known that before Jacques Perault and Gilles Regent, sworn tabellions<sup>1</sup> of the seal affixed to all contracts in the said bailiwick, and in the presence of the King and of the Queen and by their command, Monsieur the Chancellor has said and set forth before several great and notable personages that the

<sup>1</sup> Cotgrave differentiates between tabellion and notary as follows: "Tabellion—a notary public or scrivener, allowed by authority to ingross and register private contracts and obligations"; whilst "a notary fills the office in question in cities, a tabellion only in boroughs and villages."

said lord having been duly made acquainted with the great and commendable services which the high and mighty prince Don Cœsar de Bursa (*sic*), duc de Valentinois and comte de Diois, has rendered to him and to his crown, and which he trusts that the said Duke, his relations, friends and allies shall render in time to come, and likewise touching the conquest of his kingdoms of Naples and Duchy of Milan, and also for the great good qualities and virtues which the said Lord is aware reside in the person of the said Duke, and especially desiring to receive and retain him in this kingdom, and therein to bestow upon him, which he has done, the duchy of Valentinois and county of Diois, and other lands and lordships, and the said Lord and Lady being desirous, moreover, of marrying him to some good and virtuous personage of this realm ; to which end, considering the praiseworthy and commendable good qualities and virtues which reside in the person of Mademoiselle Charlotte d'Albret, natural and lawful daughter of the high and mighty prince, Monseigneur d'Albret, their near relation, and that no worthier person nor of higher lineage, can be proposed for the said alliance, have sent before to the very high and very excellent Princes the King and Queen of Navarre, the said damoiselle being the sister germane of the said King, and to the said Sire d'Albret, to make representations to them, praying them that they would consider and consent to the said marriage, and that in so doing they would be accounted to have rendered great service and pleasure to them, the said King and Queen of Navarre, and the Sire d'Albret, have, to this end, sent certain of their subjects, to appear before the said lord and lady in order to know more fully their will and



**MEDALLION PORTRAIT.**



intent, in order to obey and comply with the same, with whom certain great personages amongst the special entourage of the said Lord and Lady, and by them deputed for this purpose, have conferred regarding the said matter, and finally in this contract have thus completed the business, the subjects of the said King and Queen of Navarre and the Sire d'Albret having learned and known the great affection and goodwill which the said Lord and Lady had and have in the said matter, and to obey and comply therewith, and also on account of the great good qualities and virtues which they are given to understand reside in the person of the said Milord the Duke have in their presence this day agreed upon the said marriage in the form and manner which is more fully set forth in certain articles which they have read word by word, the terms of which are as follows : In the contract of marriage which shall be solemnized, if God will, between the high and mighty prince Don Cesar de Borsa [*sic*], Duc de Valentinois and Comte de Diois, and of Damoiselle Charlotte d'Albret, daughter of the high and mighty prince Messire Alain Sieur d'Albret, the following points covenants and articles have been negotiated, concluded, and agreed upon : First, that the said Milord the Duke shall marry as soon as may be the said damoiselle. Item that in favour and contemplation of the said marriage, the said Milord d'Albret has bestowed and settled upon the said damoiselle, his natural and lawful daughter, as her dowry and marriage portion, the sum of 30,000 *livres tournois*, which includes that part and portion and legacy which the said damoiselle might have and demand of and on the goods of the late Madame Françoise de Bretagne, her mother, which sum shall be the

actual dowry and patrimony of the said damoiselle, to be paid to her in the terms and manner which follow, that is to say, within eight months after the celebration of the marriage six thousand *livres*, and the remainder of the said sum at the rate of 1,500 *livres* per annum until the whole shall have been paid and in consideration of this sum the said damoiselle has renounced and renounces all rights of succession which she might now or afterwards claim or demand in the property or successions of the said Milord d'Albret and of the said late Dame her mother. Item the said (future husband and wife) shall enjoy community of all their goods from the day of their marriage, and in the event of the said Milord the Duke departing this life before the said damoiselle, the said damoiselle shall have for her dower, for the rest of her life, an annuity of 4,000 *livres*, from one source and another,<sup>1</sup> wherever it may seem good to her, and whichever of the houses of the said Milord the Duke she may choose and select.

Item should the said Milord the Duke depart this life before the said damoiselle, leaving issue of their marriage who shall be infants and minors, the said damoiselle shall be guardian of their persons and possessions, and shall enjoy the profits of their goods and inheritances until such time as these said children shall be of full age, maintaining and nurturing them as befits their rank, and this shall be over and above the dower, goods and acquisitions aforesaid. Item it is thereby settled and agreed that the eldest son issue of this marriage entitled

<sup>1</sup> "De prochain en prochain" Littré renders "de proche en proche" as "going from one place to the neighbouring one." By old French law, *prochaineté* was defined as "the portion of inheritance due to a person in right of relationship."

to succeed in virtue of his primogenitureship, and for the maintenance of the principalities and lordships of the said Duke, shall be and shall remain lord and universal heir to all the goods, lordships, and chattels of the said Duke, save that any other sons and daughters, should such there be, shall receive their lawful part and portion, such as by law or by custom of the place wherein the said possessions shall be situated belong and be due to them. Item and in case there should be daughters only, it is hereby settled and agreed that the eldest daughter, should she be entitled to succeed, shall be sole lady and heiress of and to all the possessions of the said Duke, save that there shall be reserved for the others their lawful part and portion such as by law or custom of the land should appertain to them as aforesaid, and moreover it is settled and agreed between the said parties that the said damoiselle may will or dispose of her own property at her good pleasure, whether it be the dowry settled upon her by the said Sire d'Albret, her father, or her rings, trinkets and other her personal property. Item and in favour and contemplation of the said marriage, the King has granted to the said Milord the Duke that if he so will, he may have in exchange for the six thousand *livres* which he has given him on the "tirage du Rosne" (tax on salt), certain lands and lordships in the duchy of Guienne, or elsewhere, as the said Milord the Duke will : and this being done, the said Monsieur the Duke Don Cesare de Borsa [*sic*], on the one part, the said Mademoiselle Charlotte d'Albret on the other, and the high and mighty Sire Messire Gabriel d'Albret, knight, Sire d'Avesnes, son of the said Milord d'Albret, Messire Regnault de Saint-Chamans, also knight, Sire de Lissac, and

Maitre Jean de Calvimont, licentiate in law, Sire de Tursac, in the name and as proxies sufficiently authorised by powers of attorney from the said Milord d'Albret, as appears by letters of special warrant in the matter, inserted at the end of these presents, on the other part, have before the said sworn tabellions declared in their proper persons that they know and confess the aforesaid things to be true, and that they have made and do make between them the treaties, agreements and covenants aforesaid, according to and in the form and manner aforesaid declared, all this as the parties have said, and promised by the faith and oath of their own persons in the name of them, and of each and every of them in good faith, that they will not henceforward run counter to nor suffer any others to run counter to the treaties, agreements, gifts, promises, consent, and things aforesaid, even as they will hold, keep, undertake, and accomplish them, and will hold them fast, stable, and with good pleasure for ever, but each party in good faith, in the same manner and in the form and manner which is aforesaid declared and devised, without in any wise going back upon or running counter to the same, and if in any manner whatsoever it should happen that the said parties and their heirs should suffer or sustain any damage, or concern, or incur costs, or expense, one party by the fault or deed of the other in default or by default of accomplishing the things aforesaid, each and every one of them in the same manner as and in the form and manner as aforesaid declared and devised, then the party by whose fault and default the said damages shall happen and come to pass, hereby has promised and promises on oath, in the presence of the said sworn tabellions, in their

own names, to pay and give account entirely to the injured party, on his simple oath, or on presentation of his letters, without any other proof, and as regards, all the things aforesaid, to do, perform, hold, keep, undertake, and accomplish, point by point, firmly and faithfully, as are aforesaid declared and devised, and in no wise to run counter to the same, the said parties, in their said names, each party in good faith, in whatsoever concerns each and every one of them, have bound and bind themselves one party to the other, and their heirs and assigns, and submit to the jurisdiction of our Court of Blois and to all others, they and their heirs and all personal property, present and to come, renouncing on their oath, in this matter, all privileges, favours and benefits given and to be given, impetrated or to impetrate, trickery, fraud, *barat*, malice, damage, and circumvention excepted ; all rights, written and unwritten, all customs and decrees of countries and places contrary to this deed, deception excepted, of lawful price, and all other deceptions and exceptions whatsoever. [Here follow the terms of the said letters of power of attorney.] Alain Sire d'Albret, Comte de Dreux, de Gaure, de Penthievre, de Périgord, Vicomte de Tartas and de Limoges, to all those to whom these presents shall come, be it known that for the entire confidence which we have in the persons of our very dear and beloved son Gabriel d'Albret and of Messire Regnault de Saint-Chamans, knight, Seigneur de Lissac and de Pazols, seneschal of the Landes, and of Maître Jean de Calvimont, licentiate in law, Sire de Tursac, our counsellor, do hereby make, create, constitute, and ordain them by these same presents our express and special proxies and envoys to treat for and contract and conclude the marriage proposed by the

King between the Duc de Valentinois and our daughter Charlotte d'Albret, and the contract of the same, together with all other matters touching and concerning the said marriage, to which end we give our said proxies authority to do, procure, treat for and conclude in the same manner, and in the form and manner which we should and do employ, as though we were present in our own person, save there should be any case or matter requiring more express or special mandate : and we promise to have and to hold agreeably, firm, and fixed, all that shall be done by them, negotiated, settled, and agreed, and other matters which shall seem good and necessary and expedient to them for the security of the said marriage, and that we shall do nothing contrary to the same, and this under bond of our own possessions ; and for safeguard of these presents we have signed them with our own hand, and caused them to be sealed, with the seal of our arms at Casteljalous, the three and twentieth day of March, in the year one thousand four hundred and ninety-nine. Signed : Alain, and beneath Roguet, and sealed with the arms of the said Sire d'Albret, with a red seal single. Given at the Castle of Blois in the presence of the very reverend father in God, George, Cardinal of Amboise, the said Milord the chancellor, Monsieur the Archbishop of Sens, Messieurs de Nemours and d'Orval, the Bishops of Bayeux, Cethe, Melse, and Viviers, the Sire de Tournon and the vice-chancellor of Bretagne ; in witness whereof we, bailiff of Blois as aforesaid, on the aforesaid sworn declaration, have caused these presents to be sealed with the seal for contracts of the said bailiwick this tenth day of May in the year of grace one thousand four hundred and ninety-nine ; thus signed Perault and Régent.

## CHAPTER XI

Marriage of Cesare and Charlotte at Blois—Brides in ancient France—  
Royal fêtes—Charlotte's dowry—What she brought to her husband  
—Portraits of the bridegroom—Cesare as Charlotte saw him.

DELAYS and discussions being finally at an end, the marriage contract was signed, on May 10, 1499, "in the Château of Blois, before the sworn tabelions of the Great Seal," and in the presence of the King and Queen, and other great and notable personages, the witnesses being Georges d'Amboise, now Cardinal de Rouen, Chancellor of France, the Archbishop of Sens, Messieurs de Nemours and d'Orval, the Bishops of Bayeux, of Cetheu, of Melse, and of Viviers, the Sieur de Tournon, and the vice-chancellor of the Duchy of Bretagne.

No much-talked-of marriage was ever celebrated in such comparative quiet, if not secrecy, as that of Cesare Borgia and Charlotte d'Albret, for, although fêtes and tournaments are said to have accompanied the event, yet, according to the testimony of foreign ambassadors actually accredited to the French court at the time, it took place "in the Queen's apartments, in the presence of the King," Anne de Bretagne's portable altar being no doubt requisitioned for the purpose.

Portable altars, according to Laborde, were usually made of precious metals, gold or silver, of marble, porphyry, agate or jasper—witness Charlotted'Albret's

“table de jaspe pour un autel,” mounted in silver-gilt, “a souvenir,” as M. Bonnaffé, suggests, “of the former splendours of the Cardinal Borgia.” The Duc and Duchesse de Valentinois were probably made man and wife by the new Cardinal de Rouen, Georges d’Amboise, who had previously witnessed their marriage contract. As for the bride’s attire, the “Inventaire” that might say so much on the point is silent. We may indeed peer, with wild surmise, into that antique coffer which was opened, fifteen years later, in the presence of Maître Jacques Dorsanne, sworn valuer of the possessions of “the late Madame la Duchesse de Valentinois,” with the question which rises irresistibly to the lips as one gazes on the “worn-out robes, laid by,” of a dead woman who has loved, and suffered, and now takes her last, long sleep: “Which was her wedding dress?”

For it is that, of all the rest, stately though they be, as befits her rank, that we desire to see, to handle, with lingering, reverent touch, then to lay back again in its quiet resting-place, its glistening fabric grown dimmer through our tears.

What of these “two panels for the front of a woman’s dress, of cloth of gold?” or, of this “pair of sleeves, without the slashings,” of the same splendid stuff? Are we looking here on all that remains of the superb *robe de nocés* in which Charlotte d’Albret stood at Cesare Borgia’s side on that May morning of 1499, “in the Queen’s apartments, in the presence of the King?”

Let us give our fancy rein. There is none to dispute our dreaming.

Did the bride wear her hair, at whose colour even we may but vaguely guess, floating joyously on her

shoulders, in compliment to Italy, her bridegroom's home? Or were those rebellious locks—we fancy that they fell in a cloud of rippling brown, shot with gold, about her lovely, wistful face—caught and held captive in one of those “crespines de fil d'or” (golden net-cauls), or by one of those jewelled diadems which she was to keep by her, long after, in one of her caskets, “for brides to wear,” as they passed from her service to the happy married life that was denied her? The “Inventaire” keeps silence still.

But we know that the bride of the Borgia must at least have been decked out for sacrifice with all the trappings and the treasures which such a bridegroom could have desired. Not for her the bridal chaplet of the flowers of Touraine, woven with song and laughter by the hands of girl-companions, to bind the brows of happier *marîées* in those fair, far-off fields of feudal France. This marriage was no pastoral idyll; not for this bride the simple robe of the *marîée des campagnes*.

Yet we shall be wronging both bride and bridegroom, adding an unmerited reproach to the black enough count which history heaps up against Cesare Borgia, if we wilfully insist upon seeing in Charlotte d'Albret at the moment of her marriage only a weeping, heartbroken, shrinking girl; in the husband bestowed upon her by her King merely a stern and terrifying tyrant. We look onward to the years when Romagna was indeed to know him in that rôle; when its “petty tyrants were to be mown down by his relentless sword, like ripe ears before the reaper”; but in such a rôle Charlotte was never to know him.

Machiavelli's “inscrutable Duke” was nothing unless it suited his purpose to be so; and then he

played his rôle of the moment to such perfection that any victim marked for destruction, and a degree less skilled than he in duplicity, walked blindfold into his trap. Thus, he may be seen at Sinigaglia, the frank and forgiving suzerain, welcoming his brother bandits with a smile, while with swift, secret gesture, and the flicker of an eyelid, he consigned them to the cord and wrenching-pin of Michelotto. It was far from suiting his purpose now to place his new ally under the disagreeable necessity of repenting, as soon as made, of his bargain.

On the contrary, he must prove himself to be, in the eyes of the sovereigns of Navarre and of the d'Albrets, his new kinsfolk, as well as of the whole French court, which had "had such firm faith in the success of the marriage," the honourable and excellent personage whom the French King and Queen had recommended to the Sire d'Albret. It was his pose to demonstrate to all and sundry witnesses of his unaccustomed rôle of married man, that, if Mademoiselle d'Albret had indeed brought into the common fund youth, nobility, beauty of face and form, and loveliness of character, she had, on the other hand, won the devoted love of a model husband.

Towards his bride, the pose was as plain. He had to teach her to love him. We know that he succeeded only too well.

"His was a dark soul," says one of his historians, "into whose recesses the emotion of outward things entered not, and whose immense egoism was known only to that soul itself."

"He was of solitary habits, and very secretive," adds another. It was impossible that there could have been community of interests between such a man (even though the darkest hour of his life was

not yet) and a gentle Gascon girl. But he was of the blood of Rodrigo Borgia, who added to his "pleasant and cheerful countenance a sweet and persuasive manner. With a single glance he could fascinate women, and attract them to himself more strongly than a magnet draws iron." Thus his son drew to himself for ever the heart of Charlotte d'Albret.

With the history of Cesare Borgia, Cardinal, condottiere, captain, and criminal, this slight record is not concerned, save as he cast his shadow over a life that knew no other stain. Again and again he has been haled before the bar of history. Again and again we see him tossed from judge to judge, the jaunty gallant, the dainty mignon, the consummate soldier, the prince of statesmen, the blood-stained monster, the unspeakable criminal. With these verdicts, this story of Charlotte d'Albret has nothing to do. We are not curious to know which, if any, of the portraits of the Borgia that have come down to us by hearsay, or on canvas, are the truth of the man, in his habit, as he lived. It is only the Cesare Borgia that Charlotte d'Albret loved, with whom our curiosity and our questioning have to do.

What was the truth of him? Let us remember, as we ask, that the answer, to carry conviction, whatever else be left in doubt, must shape itself to one image, and one only—the ideal of a young girl's dream.

Let us pass the long list of portraits briefly in review. From that venomous and unlovely sketch of Paul Giovio, we turn with disgust, even while we recollect that it was a murderer and a strangler and worse, of whom he writes. Rejection, too, must wait upon "the elegant, effeminate-looking Spaniard," of the Borghese Gallery, whose artist (once said to

be Raphael) and identity are now alike held to be disproved, and the "mean head, with its sinister and spiteful expression, in the manner of Federigo Zuccaro." On the remaining portraits of the Borgia, at Bergamo, Forli, Venice, Milan, Imola, and Deepdene, the last word has been said by M. Yriarte, and may be studied at length in his exhaustive work on the subject of the Borgia.

Clouded with doubt as the whole subject may be, it is yet to Italy that we must turn for the Cesare whom we seek to see through Charlotte d'Albret's eyes—Cesare of "the most beautiful head," tall, graceful, superbly strong, proud of bearing, fastidious in his tastes, luxurious in his habits, with an irresistible attraction for women. She saw him as he was seen of Boccaccio of Ferrara—possessed of "distinguished talents and a noble nature; his bearing that of a prince, singularly cheerful and merry, always in high spirits"; as the Cardinal della Rovere writes of him at the moment of his arrival in France, "that his modesty, prudence, dexterity, and excellence both of mind and body had won the affections of all." For her, we are pleased to fancy, there was no terror—instrument and victim of political intrigue as she went to his embrace—in that "implacable beauty, that superb equanimity of the criminal and the murderer," which still terrifies across the centuries those who behold in it, as M. Quinet writes, "a vision of Italian policy in the sixteenth century."

We are to remember that she saw in him, first of all, the "insulted suitor" of Charlotte, her namesake of Tarentum. Not a heart only, but wounded vanity, also, may be "caught at the rebound." So it may have been with Cesare Borgia as he read the shy

pity, which it was sweet to claim, in the pure depths of those clear, unclouded eyes that were to shed so many tears because of him. And, reading it in the face of the "loveliest girl in France," the bride who was to be the seal of an alliance which flattered his vanity no less, may it not be that that master-passion, not yet superseded by the other passion of the lust of cruelty, gratified, evoked in him an access of nobility which was to be as fugitive as it was fine? Did Charlotte d'Albret touch, though it was to be but for a few fleeting weeks, a chord that responded no more to any other hand? The type would be new to him, whose sister was Lucrezia Borgia, and her duenna, Adriana de Mila; but the novelty would pall. He had left her for ever before she had had time to read boredom in his burning eyes.

Of that May-time wedding in old Touraine, history keeps but the scantiest records; yet in the days before and after the bride must have tasted the sweets of queenship. She found a whole court ready to welcome her with open arms, with relief from prolonged tension, as an angel of reconciliation and of promise. In the eyes of her sovereigns she read the reward assured of her docility, the benediction of the careless smile vouchsafed to the child that submits to the will of its superiors because it must. To Cesare Borgia she came as the sweet restorer of his banished good humour, the gentle soother of his wounded vanity. She was to be sacrificed, but it was to be as a king's daughter. A girl's reluctance—what was that beside "the good of the realm," to which Jeanne de Valois had been but lately offered up? A girl's tears? Early dew, quickly dried in the sunshine of royal favour, of courtiers' flattery, of women's envy, of jewels that

Anne de Bretagne herself might covet, lifted at length from their hiding-place in coffers and caskets to adorn the destined lady of the Borgia's hand, if not of his heart. They sparkle still, those jewels, on the page of Charlotte d'Albret's "Inventaire," though elsewhere we look for them in vain.

"Not less magnificent" than the treasures of gold and silver ware which were to be part of the price of her purchase, are those marvels of necklaces, carcanets, pendants, rings and bracelets, chains and head-ornaments, which seem to be once more crowning that meek head, or rising and falling on that poor, faithful heart, destined to bear its heavier burden unlifted through the years that were mercifully shortened. If her fetters were of iron, at least they were thickly set with gems. They were found in order, long laid by, after their wearer's death, locked away in their "nest" of caskets (a fashion of the day, to facilitate the coffer in which the whole was enclosed being more easily carried or removed from place to place): a great, pear-shaped pearl set as a brooch, a ruby and emerald ring, a ruby set in gold, a chain of gold, with a cabochon ruby pendant, five emeralds set in gold, a large and long emerald set in gold, a ruby and emerald necklace, a necklace of twenty rubies and eighty pearls, a hair ornament of twelve diamond roses and thirteen pearls, gorgerins of filigree encrusted with pearls, handfuls of unset gems, rubies, pearls, emeralds, and diamonds, "cut both point and facet-wise."

The "corbeille de mariage" is not yet exhausted when we have gazed upon these princely marvels of the goldsmiths' and the jewel-workers' craft. Turn to the *cassoni* (wedding coffers), "*coffres blancs à la mode d'Italie*," as they are styled in the "Inven-

taire," and pause to note their exquisite workmanship. The greatest of the Italian masters, says M. Bonnaffé, did not scorn to beautify the *cassoni*, which were generally square in shape, though sometimes in imitation of the sarcophagi of antiquity, supported by caryatides, usually of white wood, decorated with appliquéés of white plaster, gilt or painted, the interior ornamented with arabesques and sprays of rose-leaves, gilt or painted, the whole combining exquisite taste with the most marvellous wealth of design.

Much of the wealth which Cesare Borgia brought with him from Italy consisted of the splendid gold and silver plate which was destined to adorn the tables and dressers of the living-rooms in the castle where his young bride was fruitlessly to await his return from the place of its origin.

It comprised thirteen articles in solid gold—salt-cellars, dishes, forks, and spoons; thirteen in rock-crystal—ewers, flagons, open and covered dishes; 334 in silver or silver-gilt, the greater part enamelled—cups, dishes, saucers, wine and water pots, eighteen tall dishes, six drageoirs, nine basins, nefs, tankards, and trenchers; besides the twenty silver ornaments which we shall find in the chapel inventory of Madame la Duchesse de Valentinois; the whole masterpieces of the goldsmiths' and silversmiths' craft.

For table decoration on ceremonial or festive occasions there were several ornaments of remarkable beauty. They included more than one specimen of those exquisite receptacles for spices, wines, spoons, and table-napkins, sometimes for the fan or gloves of host or guest, known as *nefs*, miniature ships of war, fully rigged. Two beautiful examples in the list of the Valentinois possession are described as

being of mother-of-pearl, masts, sails, and cordage complete, supported, the one by four griffins, the other by four snails. There was also a citadel, with four towers, in silver, and a ewer of rock-crystal, set with six sapphires and seventeen pearls, and a table-fountain, for spraying rose-water, made in the shape of a belfry, with female figures enamelled on silver-gilt.

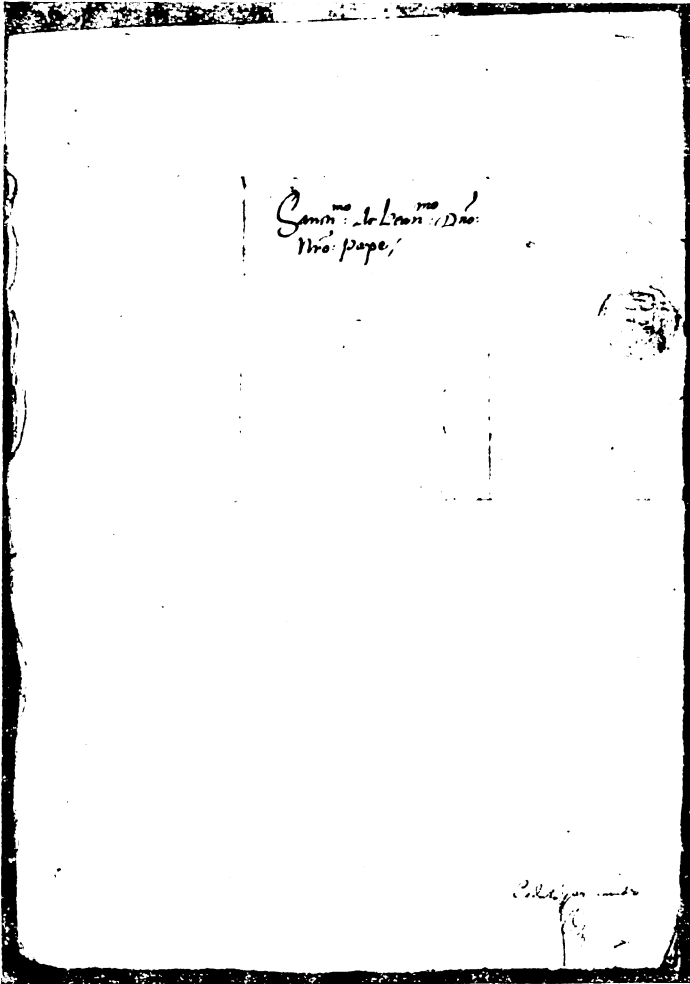
The two silver forks in the inventory were for special use, to eat mulberries, toasted cheese, etc., as suggested by M. Bonnaffé. Forks were used for carving meat, but did not come into general use in France until the reign of Henri III. Prior to that date, the knife, the spoon, and even the fingers, were used at table, the latter being frequently wiped on the serviette which was thrown over the left shoulder.



[illegible]

*Humillim esclausa*  
Moduch & Vater

From an MS. in the British Museum.





## CHAPTER XII

The bride's letter to her father-in-law—The Borgia smile—Bonfires and congratulations—Cesare, son of France and knight of St. Michael—The Duke must "live well"—The students of Paris play a farce—Brief days at Blois.

WITH great good humour and boisterous manifestations of delight the Pope gave commands that Rome should be set ablaze with bonfires, to mark his rejoicing over the satisfactory conclusion of Cesare's matrimonial embassy. That these commands should have been promptly executed, but more generally by the Spanish, rather than the Italian, dwellers in the Eternal City, was regarded as "to the great scandal of the Church and of the Apostolic see." In open Consistory, by the Pope's orders, Cardinal Sanseverino read aloud to the assembled College the letters in which the French King announced the accomplishment of his purpose for the new Duke, as well as that in which the young Duchess hastened to express her filial devotion, her longing to "go speedily to Rome in order to humbly greet His Holiness," adding, poor child, "a few playful words" to the effect that she was "very well satisfied with the Duke."

Alexander also received from France, by way of invitation to join in the general rejoicing, a hundred casks of wine of Burgundy; while he learned, at the same time, with a satyr-like smile, of the wedding

gifts of Anne de Bretagne to his Duke—a horse, and a gold ring with a heart engraved thereon, the latter of the value of 400 ducats, which the Queen prayed Cesare “to wear for love of her.”

Congratulations from the Italian states now began to pour in upon the Pope. First came those of Venice conveyed by the ambassador, Polo Capello. Alexander, thanking the “Magnificent orator” for his expressions of good-will, promised, “God giving us the occasion,” to do the Signiory good service, should need require. In offering congratulations to the Duke, added Alexander, the Signiory were congratulating a son of their own.

On May 19, being the Feast of Pentecost, the ducal bridegroom was solemnly invested, in the presence of the court and of his young bride, with the Order of St. Michael, the noblest and most exalted in all Christendom. Cesare, lover of pageantry, must have abandoned himself, with all the Borgia “*joie de vivre*,” to his place in the picture, so easy to call up once more across the centuries to its setting in the stately Château of Blois. Good humour had not only been restored to him; it grew by leaps and bounds as the days heaped fresh honours at his feet. What was it to him, that from the scornful security of her own betrothal to another, the Princesse de Tarente still flashed her contempt upon “the apostate priest, son of a priest, and a bloodthirsty fratricide”? In the foreground of his life there now stood a fairer Charlotte, through whose white hands there might yet come to him a more brilliant diadem than the crown of Naples.

The investiture of a knight of the Order of St. Michael was picturesque in the extreme. The ceremony began with a celebration of Mass by the

Chancellor of the Order, or by some other notable ecclesiastic appointed by the King, as Grand Master. During the celebration, the collar and mantle of the new knight, having been got ready, were placed before the King, on "a fair cloth," usually of red satin or taffetas. Both collar and mantle were ceremoniously censed, following the censuring of the altar. Mass being said, the oldest knight was deputed to bring in the candidate for admission to the Order. Every knight made an offering of gold at the moment of his investiture, besides paying a fee of forty crowns. The King then proceeded to invest the knight with the collar and mantle, using words to the following effect :

"The Order receives and clothes you with the habit of this amiable Companionship and brotherly Union for the exaltation of our Catholic Faith, in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

The knights assembled with one voice replied :  
 "In the Name and to the praise of God and the honour of the said Order, so be it, Amen."

By the 22nd article of the Order, the mantle of the knights was decreed to be of white damask reaching to the ground, richly embroidered with a border of golden cockleshells, and edged with ermine. The cap was to be of crimson velvet, high and peaked. The collar of the Order was a necklace of interlaced gold cockleshells, with loops of gold between, and a pendant representing St. Michael engaged in mortal combat with the dragon. Officers other than knights, of whom there were thirty-six, wore robes of camlet, furred with miniver.

At the investiture, the Chancellor exhorted the newly invested knight to "extirpate vices, to in-

crease in virtue, and to give a praiseworthy example of life to all other knights and noble gentlemen." Cesare Borgia's memory of that exhortation, it would seem, was as short-lived as his faith with Charlotte d'Albret.

News such as Alexander loved—for it ministered to his pride in his "beloved Duke"—came to hand, thick and fast, from the French court. On June 2 letters announced that the Duc de Valentinois, "has had a hundred lances from the King, is made of the blood royal, and is in great repute in France." Later advices record that "the Duke is made the King's adopted son, to the Pope's great pleasure." Little wonder that the "Pope, who will do anything to get estates for his sons, is at present all French, and desires above everything the coming of the French into Italy, for the undoing of Milan, although he will not enter into a league with them until he sees how they prosper!" He "desires the realm for his son." For all this good news, however, Alexander had to pay a price. A sum of 22,000 ducats had to be withdrawn from the Papal treasury "to send to the Duke of Valentinois in France, where he is living at great expense, and this money was over and above what he took with him." The Duke's major-domo, who was despatched for this purpose to Rome, returns with the required sum, the Pope sending an additional gift of 10,000 ducats, "in order that he (the Duke) may live well."

In a conversation with Hieronimo Donado, the Pope admitted that he had "entertained strong doubts as to the marriage ever taking place, but, now that it was concluded, he was pleased, and, whereas he used to speak evil of France, he was now all French, for the love the King of France had evinced

towards his Duke." Cesare was the Pope's one object and subject. Now he designed to give him Pavia and the country beyond the Po; then the lordship of Piombino, allying himself to that end with the Florentines against Pisa.

In France, meanwhile, Charlotte was moving in an enchanted world, the world that opens once, if but in mirage, for the woman who loves, and believes herself beloved. She did not hear, or heard only as a harsh echo, softened by the distance, the ribald uproar with which the students of the University of Paris assailed the conclusion of the Valentinois-d'Albret marriage. Rude witticisms, scandalous jests, coarse buffoonery, what were they to her, who was very well satisfied with her Duke?

The incident in question, however, which was communicated to the Holy See by Cesare Guaschi, the last representative of Ludovico Sforza to the Papal court from April to September, 1499, was sufficiently serious to require the royal intervention. The students having composed a song and burlesque relative to the marriage, the King sent the Chancellor and M. de Ligny to inquire into the matter, with authority to "reprimand and punish the said offenders," their action being calculated to bring great ignominy on the Holy See; whereupon, the students, to the number of 6,000, rose against the royal commission, threatening to murder the commissioners, such a tumult being provoked, that the King himself was obliged to come to Paris in order to quell it. The offensive satire seems, however, says M. Pélissier, to have left no trace in the voluminous correspondence which passed between France and Italy at that time. Cesare Guaschi had his information from Cardinal de Gurck, Raymond

Perraud, who returned from France to Rome in February, 1499; it may therefore be assumed to be authentic. No further details, however, are forthcoming.

In the shadow of wars and rumours of wars, Charlotte's honeymoon wore too swiftly to a close. Now it was the projected French expedition into Italy of which the court talked to the exclusion of all else. The Pope, "become completely French," wrote and talked of nothing but the coming of the French army, his Duke amongst them. His impatience passed all bounds. Cesare must allay his fears and questioning by repeated assurance that the King would certainly be in Italy by the middle of August; and that, as certainly, he would carry out the expedition against the Duke of Milan, the enemy of the House of Borgia. For the rest, the correspondence between Cesare and his father seems to have consisted chiefly of demands for more money.

It has been suggested, probably with some likelihood, that Cesare did not expend all of the amounts transmitted to him from Rome on his personal "good living," which must have cost him but little, housed, as he and his bride were, from the moment of their marriage, at the French court; but, "judging it prudent to place part of his fortune beyond the reach of the chances of a soldier's life, made over to his wife, with a view to her investing the money in France, certain of these sums." We shall see her indeed gradually acquiring considerable property in Berry and Vermandois; it may well have been in accordance with her husband's instructions.

Towards the end of June, the King left Blois for Lyons, stopping en route at the Château de Bomor-

antin;<sup>1</sup> making a *détour*, however, in order to avoid passing through Bourges, now the residence of the newly created Duchesse de Berry, his former consort. The Queen and the Duchesse de Valentinois remained, meanwhile, at Blois. In that setting we are to think of Cesare and his wife for a little longer, together. But how or of what they talked, those two, so strangely, and, as it seems to us, so infamously linked together by kingly craft and papal diplomacy, the stones of the royal castle give no hint. The days were crowded; but they could scarcely have been with lovers' gossip. True, Cesare had his dreams, and they were spacious, but there was no room in them for a Charlotte d'Albret. Never, in any vision of his "deliberate resolve" fulfilled, did he see the Princess of the Landes Queen of Italy at his side. Nay, the darker doubt leaps to shaping at that thought. From what fate was not Charlotte spared and shielded by the cruel destiny that kept her body chained to France, while her heart followed in her husband's wake to that Italy which she was never to see?

The things for which there is no room in the lives of men like Cesare Borgia are things to be swept, crushed, killed, out of existence. The youth, the beauty, the virtues, of the woman on whom he had bestowed his name would have proved no safeguard for her. These things were not to avail in the ugly years to come to avert the sword, the secret poison, from those who stood for obstacles in his path. They would not have availed for Charlotte.

True, it would be part of his rôle of ideal lover to

<sup>1</sup> Cesare was at Romorantin on June 27, 1499, for a letter in the Valencian dialect to his father, bearing that date, is written from that place. The document is reproduced in this volume.

console her with promises of their reunion when peace was once more restored to Italy. Would she not bear her part, he would whisper, as they paced the stately gardens of Blois side by side in the summer twilights that were all too short, in the greatness which his French ally was sworn to help him win ? It was so easy to soothe a girlish grief with visions of a crown, to point the tear-dimmed eyes of the young wife, as she clung closely to his arm, to the crowned image of herself, no longer Duchesse de Valentinois, but, who could tell, Queen of Italy, rather, united under the banner of the Borgia ? It was a foolish, as well as a false consolation to offer to such a soul. Queenship of Italy, even at the side of an adored husband, would have been too heavy a burden for her who was not born for greatness, but for a simple happiness which was denied her.

## CHAPTER XIII

Lord and Lady of Issoudun—Romorantin of the Angoulêmes—Farewell for ever—Heart beyond the Alps—The Golden Rose.

It is pleasant to picture, as many inferences permit us to believe, that a short space of companionship was vouchsafed to Charlotte with her husband apart from and rid of the prying eyes of courtiers, and the distractions and formalities of a court.

According to contemporary correspondence Cesare Borgia set out with the King for Lyons, taking the opportunity thus afforded of making himself acquainted with his lordship of Issoudun, which had been conferred on him as far back as August 13, 1498, it being now the month of July, 1499.

Scarcely entered into the town, however, its new lord was taken ill, the King continuing his journey to Lyons alone. The indisposition of the Duke lasted but a short time; it is permissible, however, to suppose that he was tenderly nursed to convalescence by his young bride, who would certainly hasten to her husband's side at the first reports of his illness. It would be, not only a wifely duty, but an opportunity too precious to be lost, for Charlotte thus to let slip the chance of prolonging the now rapidly diminishing rosary of days on which she could count to keep him near her.

The old town, girdled then as now by its ancient vineyards, sacked by Pepin in the eighth century,

by its orchards and walnut-trees, and by the tall poplars outlining the placid Théols, would be a more idyllic setting for wedded love than the crowded court at Blois.

How did the convalescent and his tender nurse pass the days of their sojourn at Issoudun? Did they ride out in the radiant summer weather of Touraine to La Châtre, peaceful among its smiling meadows, watered by the quiet Indre, and catching a glimpse of the grim towers and stern solitude of the Château of La Motte Feuilly, dream together of a day—actually to dawn for only one of them—when they should enter it as lord and lady? One of the historians of the Château expresses the opinion that the building bears evident traces of having been altered under the direction of an owner belonging to a period contemporary with that of Cesare Borgia. If this be so, however, it was reserved for Charlotte to carry out her husband's plans, for she did not become mistress of the Château until five years later. It may well be, nevertheless, that it was the memory of some such glimpse as we have pictured, during a stay at Issoudun in 1499, that eventually drew her weary steps and broken heart within its frowning walls.

Issoudun itself, a royal domain, from its earliest beginnings—shrouded, like the Borgia themselves, in mystery from its cradle—with its memories of Roger Taillefer, of Richard Cœur de Lion, of a long line of the name of Eudes, and many another mediæval worthy, would flatter the pride of possession in its latest lord, while its more romantic associations would minister to the charm it imposed upon his young wife. Did they ever stand together, in the abbey of Nôtre Dame of Issoudun, which Charlotte

d'Albret was to remember in her death-bed benefactions, before the tomb of "the very high and mighty Madame Anne de Savoie," the first wife of Federigo of Naples, and mother of Charlotte of Tarentum, who died at the ancient Tour de Pandy at Issoudun, as her epitaph records, April 23, 1480 ?

Did Charlotte find time to slip away to Bourges, avoided, as though it harboured the plague, by Louis XII. on his journey to Lyons, to visit, as a shrine, the old Palace of the Dukes of Berry, the home of a saint to be, Jeanne de Valois ? Did the girl-bride fling herself, with an impulse quickened by the happiness she believed to be her own, into those poor unrounded arms, kissing with tenderest compassion that pale, unlovely face, not dreaming how soon—a radiant bride no more, but a broken-hearted woman also—she would seek the shelter of that embrace and hide her tears against those pallid cheeks once more ?

We know that in this year Cesare Borgia was actually in Bourges, though whether on his way to Issoudun, or returning from it, is in doubt. But the town records for the year 1498-9 acquaint us with the fact of the visit, as also with that of the sovereign honours rendered to him, doubtless by the King's command, by the townspeople. Profiting by the princely example of Avignon a few months previously, we learn that the distinguished visitor was entertained by "dancers, who painted their faces, and carried in their hands branches of rosemary." The record, however, is silent concerning the presence of the Duchesse de Valentinois at the fêtes offered to her bridegroom.

For imaginations apt to trace comparison and correspondence between habitation and inhabitant,

between life's haunted houses and those whose personalities and passions have bitten deep into the stone, there is full and fascinating play for their fancy in the caprice of destiny which gave to the old town of Issoudun, on the threshold of the sixteenth century, a Lord and Lady so widely sundered in the essentials of the soul as Cesare Borgia and Charlotte d'Albret.

For it is here, if at all, that those ill-assorted natures touch the skirts of reconciliation. Issoudun, itself, with its "two soul-sides," stands for the symbol of both husband and wife.

In those clouds which, as one of the picturesque chronicles of Berry remind us, for ever float about the cradle of Issoudun, is the flight too far towards that other "cloud of mystery," which "was never long lifted from the Borgia family," that mask, above all, now symbol, now fact, in which one of them, at least, delighted to shroud, now his features, now his infamy?

Is not the ducal condottiere, the cold and cruel captain-general of the armies of the Holy Roman Church, most fitly placed in that frowning fortress of the Tour Blanche, lovely only in name, with its walls seared with hieroglyphs of piteous plea and pathetic plaint that never reached an outside world, echoing with the cries, the curses, and the clamour of the conquered, the tortured, and oppressed?

Would not the basilisk eye of him who was shortly to be that Duke of Romagna before whom petty tyrants and the innocent blood were alike to go down, like frail foliage before the wind, gloat, with a fiendish delight, over the signs and symbols which would everywhere meet that roving gaze, of the feudal lord's rights of life and death, the stocks, the

pillory, and the gallows ? For the court of justice, like the royal residence, stood within the battle-mented walls of the Castle. To turn from the silent setting to the long procession of those who had once peopled palace and prison, Cesare Borgia would still find kindred and companionship in his new castellany. The shades of Rodrigue de Villandrado, of Juan de Salazar ("The Great Captain"), famous free-lances of the fifteenth century, would salute, in this Spanish scoundrel, one under whose banner they would have been proud to enlist.

Louis XII. had not bestowed amiss—if environment were all—when he flung open the gates of Issoudun to Cesare Borgia.

But Issoudun, as we have already reminded ourselves, has another "soul-side." To that, we know, we feel, we see, the soul of Charlotte d'Albret must have gone out with an impulse of response and reflection of which the changeful centuries have not been able to defraud us who come so long after. What joy to rush out, from haunted dungeon and frowning keep, from stern justice and cruel habitations, into that peaceful, pastoral country at their gates, a land of vine-dressers and herdsmen, of wool, and wine, and watered gardens, haunted also, but how sweetly !

For us, the piteous, lovely shade of Charlotte d'Albret seems for ever wandering through these verdant, flowering meadows, along these green and gracious banks of Théols, as one who had but to stoop to its pure and sparkling waters to behold her own perfections mirrored there. Sister to Blanche of Castile, who gave her name to the White Tower of Issoudun, and the gift of peace to France, that noble woman's figure does indeed "make glad"

the poplar-sentinelled oasis of the desolate plains of Berry where she once reigned as Lady.

There would be business matters, too, to be discussed between husband and wife, the better for the comparative privacy in which they found themselves at Issoudun. Here, no doubt, Cesare proposed, if he did not actually sign, the power of attorney granted by him on the eve of his departure for Italy, empowering his young wife to "administer and govern his estates, the county and duchy of Valentinois and Diois, and other his domains, lordships, goods and chattels, in the kingdom of France as well as in Dauphiné," as witness the actual document amongst Charlotte's neatly docketed papers long after. Here, also, the Duc de Valentinois probably set his seal to that other document which transferred to his Duchess all his worldly possessions, furniture, jewels, plate, etc., at the day and hour of his death.

Her invalid nursed back to health, and all their intimate business transactions brought to a close, Charlotte and Cesare departed together to rejoin the Queen at Blois. Immediately on their arrival, an epidemic having broken out in the town, and invading the royal household itself, a member of which was fatally attacked, it was deemed advisable that Anne, who was then expecting the birth of her daughter, Claude, afterwards Queen of François I., should be removed to Romorantin. The emergency of her case compelled Anne to accept a hospitality which could not but have been most distasteful to her, namely, that of Madame d'Angoulême, Louise de Savoie, mother of François, afterwards the successor of Louis XII. on the throne of France. The two ladies, much to the King's annoyance, were on very

bad terms, there being little in common between the uncompromising virtue of the one and the natural frivolity of the other, undisciplined by the eighteen years of virtual captivity to which Louis XI. had consigned her, as a youthful widow, in the Château de Cognac. Louise de Savoie hated the strict court of Anne, which she found dull and insupportable; while it is more than probable that Madame d'Angoulême was not without enemies only too ready to report to the Queen her malicious joy at the death of Anne's male children, standing as they did in the way of her "Cesare" to a throne.

It would have been irony indeed had the child born to Anne during her enforced sojourn at Romorantin proved to be the Dauphin whose advent Louise de Savoie so much dreaded. But we can imagine with what fresh triumph the Queen's hostess wrote down in her journal on October 13, 1499, that "My daughter Claude was born in my house at Romorantin."

Other chroniclers record that Anne was "well received" by her kinswoman on this occasion. It was not part of Louise's policy to give Louis cause for complaint in her treatment of his Queen; his friendship for the mother of his nephew survived all Anne's petulant attempts to destroy it.

It was the epoch of Romorantin's greatest splendour. The records of the town which have been preserved in its archives present us with a vivid picture of the expenses incurred for the constant succession of royal progresses and visits. On these antique parchments we may read of the royal letters patent whereby Louis ordered the King's attorney to pay out of the town's revenue the expenses of the sojourn of the court at Romorantin when "notre

très chère et très aimée fille aînée, Claude de France," was born there. The stay in question extended, as we learn from the same records, over eight months.

But for us Romorantin is chiefly noteworthy because it was there that the parting which was to prove final took place between Cesare Borgia and Charlotte d'Albret. History concerns itself but little with the date, as with all that touches her, though the place is much in the correspondence of Italian envoys of the period. We only know that it was branded in letters of fire on that pure and patient heart, burning at last so deeply into its faith and tenderness, that a day came when the pain, grown unendurable, killed her, as surely as the hired assassin, Michelotto, strangled his master's victims. By leisurely degrees, Louis had taken the first steps of his projected journey towards Italy. At the end of June, Cesare had written to his father informing him that the King intended going to Lyons, and that he would certainly carry out the expedition against Milan, promising to be at Asti by the middle of August. At that date, leaving the court at Lyons, the King, attended by a troop of ten horsemen, and accompanied by the Duc de Valentinois, with five, rode post-haste to Romorantin, where the Queen and the Duchess were still in residence. Louis and Cesare remained there for about a fortnight. There Charlotte d'Albret watched her brief married life to its close; thence she saw her husband go from her, as other women, before and since, have seen their best-beloved go from them, gaily, into the teeth of war that bears so fierce a grudge against the fragile happiness of wedded lovers. This man went as gaily as any—of that, we may be



**GEORGES D'AMBOISE.**



sure—he was going, in great good humour, at a king's side, to win his way to Imperial power; greater than he had come, eight short months before, to Chinon. Only now there was no music of trumpet or rebec; and one woman's heart, we may well believe, would have had it so. Partings such as hers still seek a maker of melody that may be borne.

Nor do we querulously ask of those silent stones of Romorantin, good and trusty guardians of the words they spoke together at the last, to render up the secret that Cesare Borgia and Charlotte d'Albret committed to their keeping long ago. Rather would we, pressing down renouncing hands upon the cold dumb masonry, adjure it to keep that dumbness unbroken to the close. It is to Charlotte d'Albret's honour, and her right that we forgo such idle gratification. Not lightly, even, shall we wonder whether that "double C" of red enamel, or that "golden C" of the "Inventaire," was pressed into her trembling, clinging hand as it fluttered for the last time in Cesare Borgia's, not yet stained with the deeper stains that cry out against him across the centuries.

One instant only, before the curtain of sight and speech and touch falls between them for ever, we take our last look of Charlotte as we are to behold her no more—did Cesare Borgia ever so behold her in the years that were to come? She stands there, waving her white hand for farewell, as she stood an instant in his life, like the lily that she was, worthy, in its cool purity, of some better fate than to be reflected in the foul and muddy waters, with dark depths of horrors unnamable and unimagined, which the name of Borgia the condottiere conjures up.

On Monday, October, 6, 1499, Cesare Borgia, Duc de Valentinois and "son of France," rode at the French King's side when he entered Milan, surrounded by a brilliant retinue, reminiscent of the entry into Chinon, for here, as there, the Pope's son rides a horse richly caparisoned with gold and silver trappings, attended by pages superb in velvet and lackeys lordly in brocaded doublets.

His derelict Duchess would see him, through that cruel distance to which his iron will consigned her, returning, fresh from his triumphs at Imola, Forli, and Rimini, to make his triumphal entry into Rome, February 26, 1500, with Cardinals and envoys, gentlemen and trumpeters, heralds and acclaiming crowds for his vanguard; himself, as ever, an arresting, insolent figure, clad in black velvet, a belt edged with pearls, a mantle lined with ermine, and a gold chain about his neck; his foolish father weeping and laughing by turns at sight of him; every Roman window blossoming into women's faces that showered smiles upon his passing by.

She would stand in broken and yearning spirit at the side of the conqueror at the moment when he received, from the hands of the Pope, on Sunday, March 29, the twofold honours of the insignia of Gonfaloniere of the Holy Roman Church and the Golden Rose. It was the hour of Cesare's highest triumph; an hour that was to strike for him no more. But in it, while it lasted, he was Cesare Borgia of France, Duke of Valentinois; he was to be Duke of Romagna, Prince of Adria, and Lord of Piombino.

His title of Gonfaloniere, originally signifying standard-bearer, marked him out as invested with the supreme command of the Papal armies. In Florence, and in the other old republics of Italy,

the title was borne by the chief magistrate for the time being, and is still thus employed, says Mr. Hutton, in many towns, more especially in the States of the Church. The gonfalon, says the same authority, the banner of the Church, was always white, with the Golden Keys displayed thereon, surmounted by the umbrella-shaped baldachino or canopy usually carried over the Pope in solemn processions. This device was borne on the armorial shields of the Gonfalonieri, impaled between their proper quarterings, as it may be seen on the walls of the fortress of Forli, and reproduced in M. Yriarte's "Autour des Borgia."

The presentation of the Golden Rose, dating from the eleventh century, was one of the most picturesque ceremonies in the Roman Church, the gift being usually bestowed upon the favoured recipient at a special audience of the Sovereign Pontiff, to whose presence he was conducted by the Cardinals, attended by an imposing cavalcade. Many of the sermons preached by the Popes on these occasions have been recorded; they are brief, but characterised by much poetic imagery, and by a beauty of diction which seems to have been inspired by the ideal of the Queen of Flowers itself. The Rose, made of gold and at one period richly set with jewels, was given with words to the following effect:

"Receive, beloved child, this evidence and lasting token of the love we bear thee, as much for thy signal service towards this Apostolic See as for the high virtues by which thou shinest among men. Accept this mystic rose, bedewed with balm and musk typifying the sweet odours that should exhale from the good deeds of us all, especially of those in high places. Accept it, well-beloved, who in the

temporal order art noble, mighty, and endowed with great power, and may virtue grow in thee ever as a rose planted beside rivers of water, which grace may He Who is Three in One for all eternity vouchsafe to grant you out of His abounding lovingkindness.”<sup>1</sup>

When it is remembered to what manner of man it was that such words of exquisite exhortation were addressed, whether literally, or in effect; whence he came, in that early spring of 1500; what lay behind him; above all, whither he was journeying; surely, here, malefic irony struts its proudest even through that shameless pontificate of Rodrigo Borgia.

<sup>1</sup> For the presentation of the Golden Rose to Borso d'Este, see "Dukes and Poets in Ferrara" (Gardner), pp. 116-17. From this account, we gather that the order of the ceremonial was as follows: Mass having been said, and the benediction given, the Pope sat down, and made a fine sermon, and a long and goodly oration, wherein he explained to what end the Church had invented this festivity of the Rose, and what it signified, and how it was given to one most worthy prince of this world, for a similitude, to exalt every man to the desire of eternal good things, to which we all who are in this life should tend, like men, truly elect and champions, making every resistance to the things that are of the devil and contrary to the will of God. The Cardinal of Pavia then went to the altar, to take the Rose in his hand, to bring it into the sight of all, the recipient taking it into his keeping on his knees. At the conclusion of the ceremony, he rode through the streets carrying the precious jewel.

## CHAPTER XIV

The other Charlotte—The Double Crown—Borjas of Jativa—The lost cipher—The after-history of Charlotte of Naples—How her father paid the price of her scorn.

BEFORE the Princesse de Tarente finally passes from the stage on which she might have played her part at the side of Cesare Borgia, it will be of interest briefly to pass in review the secret springs, impelled more by coincidence than caprice, to which we can trace the obstinate quest by Alexander Borgia and his son of the Aragonese alliance, and the pitiless price which they did not fail to exact from Federigo of Naples in revenge for the affront offered by his daughter to the "bellissimo Duca."

The whole subject has recently received the close attention and scholarly treatment of Mr. Albert Van de Put, who claims, with undoubted authority, in his monograph entitled "The Aragonese Double Crown and the Borja or Borgia Device," that "the subject in question transcends the merely curious," that "it seems probable that Rodrigo Borgia indeed adopted, as a device, insignia which carried old regal association not at all uncongenial to his ambitions or incompatible with the name he bore."

Sicily and Aragon had links of contact, as our author points out elsewhere in his study, which were startling enough to arrest the attention and fire the ambitions of Alexander VI.; and the vastness

of the dream which he shaped in sequence from the vision of the Double Crown is the measure of the unforgivable insult which a woman's obstinacy and scorn inflicted thereon.

To trace the beginnings of the dream—which belongs, indeed, to the history of the Borgias, father and son, yet which cannot but be briefly touched upon in pages concerned with the marriage-making of one of them—we must journey to the little Spanish town of Jativa, with white church-towers nestling among palms and orange-trees. It is the cradle of the Borja family, afterwards to be the Borgias of Italy, and destined to give two Popes to Rome. In the brain of which Borgia did the bold ideal first begin to shape itself which was borne in carving and wrought in ironwork on the walls of the Castle of Gandia, the escutcheon of Aragon-Barcelona, and the Double Crowns radiant? Was that audacious aspiration born of some strange alchemy in the entourage of the Prince of Aragon who was destined to found the dynasty of Aragon on the throne of Naples, and whose confidential secretary and intimate friend was Alonzo Borja, afterwards Bishop of Valencia, then Cardinal, and finally Calixtus III.? May not he, in turn, have bequeathed the splendour of the vision to his sister's son, Rodrigo, destined to be Pope also, under the name of Alexander VI.?

It may well be so; but for us it is of supreme interest to inquire at what precise moment it was that the father, who "did nothing that he said," first disclosed to the son, who "said nothing that he did," the dazzling device of the Double Crown? Or, was disclosure needed between two experts in crime—one of whom, it has been said, "seems to have been born only that he might execute the evil

designs of the other" ? A moment there must have been, nevertheless, a conference without witnesses—shall we place it in those princely apartments where Cesare held his court, on the upper floor of the Torre Borgia, above the Hall of the Pontiffs ?—when the key to the whole fatality of the Borgia policy was first forged, when the evil blood that was in him first responded, without hesitation, to its earliest contact with the poisonous ambition installed into his veins by his father.

Can we not trace the hold it took upon that vanity ever greedy of impression in that astonishing sequence of vainglorious allegory and emblem upon his "Queen of Swords" so ably analysed by M. Yriarte ? Was it not for one who already saw himself the crowned and triumphing Cæsar that he delighted to impersonate, "reaching a throne by the way of the sword," that cutler, artist, and engraver, goldsmith and enameller, conspired, under the direction of the master-mind that inspired it, to interpret with their several crafts the fateful ideals which swayed him at the moment when he girt it on ?

Is it hidden there, deep beneath a cipher to which no man holds the key, inscribed upon the pedestal of the statue of Love, blindfold, on Cesare's sword ?

T. Q. I.

S. A.

G.

The secret of the interpretation of these five letters, says M. Yriarte, is lost to us who live no longer in the same environment, in touch with the same allusions, as then prevailed. We commend the unsolved mystery, nevertheless, once more, to the wrestler with the impresa of antiquity.

Elsewhere than on his sword, however, the Duc

de Valentinois lifts the veil of parable from that motive which drove him, with the lash of furies, along a road on which there was to be no turning back, until the red record of blood and brutality which bedewed it came to a close with a stroke of retribution as swift and sinister as any which the Borgia themselves could have devised.

Here is his private seal, with its proud inscription, CÆS · BORGIE · DE · FRANCIA · DUCIS · VALENTINI; with its prouder quartering of the lilies of France, pure emblem of the wife who bestowed them; with its *two crowns* shedding rays towards the base. Mr. Van de Put suggests "an error of the engraver"; in our judgment, Cesare's cipher for the Double Crown.

Once again, in a still more secure and secret hiding-place, the dreamer gives his vision rein.

Did he give to his young wife, as crowning proof of the confidence which, it has been somewhat cynically suggested, Cesare had in "the intelligence and good sense of his bride," one moment's fleeting insight into the heights to which he meant to climb, his good sword willing to carve him a way thither? Or did he merely speak in cipher still, when he bade the craftsman set upon the lid<sup>1</sup> of a certain *drageoir*, which was his bridal gift to Charlotte d'Albret, "a crown made of crowns, and between two crowns a shield"—a device repeated on yet another, with the addition of a marguerite between the crowns, the same flower terminating the floating scrolls of the armorial panel at the Ducal Palace of Gandia, representing the Borja crest and devices, and reproduced in Mr. Van de Put's book on the subject of the Aragonese impress? Or is it all mere coincidence? Are we only passing purchasers at a rummage-sale,

in that market where cloth of gold and silk attire, shoes of state and robes of empire, lie, tattered and tarnished, at the mercy of tossing fingers and harpy hands—made one, in their last low degree, with the beggarly elements from which they once drew aside their scornful skirts when sweeping by ?

The after-history of the proud Princess who refused the hand of Cesare Borgia belongs to the annals of the House of Laval, which she entered by her marriage on January 27, 1500, with Nicholas de Laval, to whom she brought a dowry of 100,000 francs. Charlotte of Aragon was not destined for a ducal, any more than for a queenly, crown. There had been a possibility of her attaining to the latter honour in 1493, when there was some talk of her being betrothed to the King of Scotland ; the project, however, seems to have fallen through owing to the illness of the young Princess. The King of Naples, then her uncle, Ferdinand, writing to Giovanni Battista Coppola, his ambassador at the court of France, requests him to explain to the French King the cause of the delay in the embassy proposed to be despatched to Scotland, the said delay having been occasioned by the illness of one of the ambassadors, Camillo Pandone, and his substitute's departure by bad weather.

“ We are much displeased,” adds Ferdinand, “ that the negotiations about this marriage are deferred, not so much as to the marriage not taking place, because the illustrious Carlotta being related to the blood royal, and having been brought up at his Majesty's court, will find no lack of good alliances, but because of her illness, and because it has been published abroad that the marriage has been prevented and deferred by reason of this indisposition,

which will be no small drawback to her making another match. If Carlotta's illness gets no worse, Coppola is to try and reopen negotiations with the King, and get the marriage settled, taking care to explain that we should not be in such anxiety about the matter had not the negotiations become public. Coppola is specially to find out whether this illness is the actual cause of the King's drawing back, or whether there is another marriage on foot, of which we have heard rumours ; in which case, the defaulter is to be assured of the Neapolitan sovereign's great displeasure. If, however, Carlotta gets worse, the illness may be a good and valid reason for the King's withdrawal of his proposal. Or, if it is a question of her dowry, and nothing reflecting on her person, the uncle of the Princess would not so much mind. Only, let him be at once informed of the facts. If there is a chance of the King of Scotland reopening the negotiations, the ambassadors will be despatched forthwith. M. de Clerieux, whom we have seen still a person to reckon with in Charlotte of Aragon's matrimonial concerns, is named in this letter as one who will 'do all he can to help you, if you will apply to him.'"

The way of revenge on Frederic of Naples for his daughter's haughty rejection of Alexander's "beloved Duke" was plain to the Borgia. It lay through Louis XII., with his insensate dream of a Valois dynasty on the throne of Naples. Already, in the autumn of 1499, the humiliation of Frederic was on foot. Thus, we are told, he viewed the imperious demand of the Pope for the dukedom of Gandia for the Duc de Valentinois, and 80,000 ducats to buy him an estate in Spain. The King of Naples, rich only in the affection of his people, with treasury and arsenals on the point of being exhausted, must

have felt, in this first muttering of the gathering storm, the beginning of the end. Threatened by France and Spain, inspired no less by private purpose as by the secret promptings of the Borgia, who never forgave an insult such as the House of Aragon had presumed to offer, the partition of his kingdom was a matter of but a few more months.

First seeking a refuge on the island of Ischia, then affording shelter to several other illustrious victims of political upheavals, Beatrice of Aragon, and Isabella of Milan amongst them, and where the Borgia before whom he fled was himself to find a brief refuge from unimagined disaster a few years later, Frederic, hard pressed by Spain, elected to throw himself on the mercy of the French King. France was the country of his first wife, Anne of Savoy; his daughter Charlotte had been brought up at its court; he could not fail to find honourable asylum there. Louis, secretly preparing the partition of his states with Spain, received the refugee with every appearance of friendliness, providing him with an escort of five galleys. But it was as a prisoner that he sailed for France, where he was granted the duchy of Anjou, in compensation for his lost dominions, and a pension of 30,000 ducats, on condition of his making no attempt to escape from his virtual captivity, his surveillance being entrusted to the Marquis de Rothelin and a guard of 300 men.

His eldest son and heir, the young Duke Ferdinand of Calabria, besieged in Tarentum by Gonsalvo de Cordova, was induced, by the most solemn promises, to capitulate to the "Great Captain" after a prolonged resistance, and was thereupon basely betrayed into the hands of the Spanish King, by whose orders

he was sent a prisoner to Spain. He survived in his captivity until 1550. His unhappy father died, heart-broken, at Tours, September 9, 1504, a few days prior to the signing of the treaties of Blois between Louis XII. and Maximilian which finally settled the fate of the kingdom of Naples.

By the terms of these shameful negotiations, into which Ferdinand the Catholic did not enter until October 12, 1505, it was proposed that his widow, Isabel de Baux (who, by a curious coincidence, pointed out by Mr. Van de Put, bore the name of an ancestress of the Borgias of Jativa) should be compelled to join her stepson in Spain. But the widowed Duchesse d'Anjou, mistrusting, with good cause, the asylum thus offered by her husband's enemy, chose rather to return to Italy, where she found a home for the remainder of her life at Ferrara. Of Federigo's other sons, Alfonso, the second, is said to have been poisoned at Grenoble; while the third, Cæsar, died at Ferrara at the age of eighteen. Federigo's only daughter, Charlotte, Dame de Laval, survived her father for little more than twelve months. She died in child-birth at Vitry, October 6, 1505, befriended to the last by Anne de Bretagne, who bestowed her name upon the child that had cost its mother's life.

This child, Anne de Laval, married, on February 24, 1522, François de la Trémoille, grandson of Louis II. of the name, who was the first husband of Cesare Borgia's daughter, Louise de Valentinois.<sup>1</sup> Charlotte

<sup>1</sup> While these pages were passing through the press, the death was announced, in Paris, of the Duc de la Trémoille, "un des premiers gentilshommes de France," as the *Gaulois* reminded its readers in an obituary notice. A similar notice in the *Daily Telegraph* of July 6, 1911, recalled "the right of the Trémoilles to the title of Altesse,

## DEATH OF THE OTHER CHARLOTTE 191

de Laval was buried October 11, 1505, in the Church of St. Tugal at Vitry, the funeral service being performed by Cardinal Philippe of Luxembourg, one of the judges who had decreed the divorce of Jeanne de Valois.

through their descent from Charlotte d'Aragon, who, as the last of the Aragons, had a claim on the kingdom of Naples. For this reason the eldest son of the Duc always bore the title of Prince de Tarente."

## CHAPTER XV

While Charlotte grieved—Her child for compensation—The Pope's wish—A captive cousin—Sweets from Cesare.

WITH what manner of man the faithful, grieving heart of Charlotte d'Albret was busied in the years that "never found an earthly close" must be sought in the story of Rome of the Borgia Papacy, dominated by that "state of the Duke of Valence," which, as Filippo Neri writes in his Commentaries, was to "vanish even as smoke in the air, or foam upon the water." History, surely, would be hard put to it to match the hideous irony of a saintly soul eating her heart out in solitude for that "human tiger," Cesare Borgia, befouled and bespattered with the innocent blood through which he dreamt of wading to the summit of his glory. He, too, was busy, though not with longing heart and wistful eyes. For the years in which wife and child waited and watched for his coming were those in which, as Gregorovius reminds us, he "appears as a destroying angel of such diabolical cunning as to make us shudder at the depravity of human nature." Through it all, true child of his age, the era of the pageant, the figure of the Valentino moves across the stage of Borgia Italy with all the pomp and circumstance which he loved.

To us, who are on the side of Charlotte d'Albret—how can we be otherwise who are in any degree

privileged to enter into the pathos of her story?— it is less than nothing that “the career of Cesare Borgia was a great epoch in Italian politics.” With that epoch, great historians have grappled, and will continue to grapple, in turn; for the fascination of the mystery of the Borgia outlives them; yet each, in common with us, who stand at the last of the line, have confessed themselves baffled, whether accusers or apologists, by the personality of the son of Vanozza.

For “it was not so much his violent and treacherous deeds,” writes that “sane and Protestant historian,” whom Mr. Edward Hutton links with Gregorovius as the two expert and dispassionate analysts of the Borgia mystery, “which horrified his contemporaries as his strange and mysterious life. A man might smile and be a villain, and his villainy was easily overlooked; but Cesare rarely smiled, and practised duplicity from mere love of the art. He made no friends; he gathered no body of followers; he eschewed the intercourse of his fellows except when his own designs required it. He affected darkness and seclusion; he enshrouded even his licentiousness in mystery; he spoke to his father in Spanish in the presence of others; he avoided all visitors and refused to talk even with his followers. Perhaps he deliberately chose to act as a foil to his father’s restless garrulity. Perhaps he thought that an affectation of secrecy was best calculated to help his plans.”

At the gate of city after city which his coming was to curse with shame and desolation and martyrdoms unspeakable, he draws rein, in gorgeous apparel of war, on his princely charger, with his following of hired murderers and men at arms, caparisoned as for a tournament, a dazzling vision of multi-coloured

plumes and glittering mail. What place for her who pined in exile in that train of "mercenaries and condottieri who rushed to follow his fortunes"? Poor, piteous, foolish heart! What place would there have been for her in any corner of that Italy, which, for her, was to remain mirage to the end? What place, we ask, for "*la belle et spirituelle Charlotte d'Albret*" in that Vatican where "neither before nor after was religion ever so publicly profaned by derisive mirth and the most shameless debauchery?" Still, these places that men and women might have filled, these thresholds they might have crossed, these windows that might have framed their faces, these rooms in which they might have lived—who shall deny them their arresting charm, their place in that fascinating topography of the imagination which shall never lack its lovers, though the written guide-books multiply upon the face of the earth?

In the light of such a thought, how clear and fresh and clean the Vatican of Alexander VI. emerges from the foul vapours of his Papacy! Even the Torre Borgia seems bathed in a cleansing radiance that puts all its devilish shades to flight, since—strange thought indeed—it might have been the home of Charlotte d'Albret! Had she come—would a heart that broke so easily have found a work to do for Rome, for Italy, ready to her hand? Would her coming have made any difference to those who writhed and shuddered, and went mad with fear at the very name she bore? Would Capua have been spared its awful carnage? Would motherhood and girlhood—pale, bloodstained, outraged spectres of Fossombrone and La Peglia—have blessed her coming as an angel of pity and deliverance? At



**MEDALLION PORTRAIT.**



least, of this we may be sure—had it been her destiny to take her place, as Duchess of Romagna, in the foul, feverish, frivolous Italy of her day, she must have passed at once to the side of those “noble and capable women whose portraits lend a singular grace to the frescoes of the Florentine painters of the beautiful and noble types of womanhood” depicted thereon. She would certainly have been found amongst those illustrious and devoted ladies, veiled, gracious figures, who flitted from one hospital to another, bringing untold comfort and consolation to the sick and dying, none knowing their rank or their names.

It was not to be. Well for her that Italy was to know her only as a name. Like Isabella d’Este, congratulating her husband that he was absent from the marriage festivities of Lucrezia Borgia at Ferrara, she might well have congratulated herself that Cesare Borgia had no need of her in Rome.

It is curious to reflect that it was Alexander VI. who was the one member of the family into which she had entered by her marriage who desired to welcome her there. He even seems to have been at some pains to bring about her reunion with her husband, and her journey into Italy. He was possibly genuinely prepared to like and to befriend his daughter-in-law, who had more than half won his heart, we may imagine, by her girlish letter at the time of her marriage, with its playful commendation of his Duke. The old reprobate would see no valid reason why Cesare, his young wife, Lucrezia, Giulia Bella, and Adriana de Mila, should not all dwell, one happy family, on the best of terms, under his paternal eye, beneath the roof of the Vatican. When the child was born which the Duchesse de

Valentinois was then expecting, he would have a new interest in life ; and by and by, when it grew up, if a boy, there would be a Cardinal's Hat and goodly benefices, or a couple of rich duchies, at his disposal, or, if a girl, her paternal, Papal grandfather could be trusted to do as well for her matrimonially as he had done, and was about to do, for Lucrezia.

At any rate, Polo Capello, prince of diplomatic gossips, writes to the Signiory of Florence as early after the Valentinois-d'Albret marriage as January, 1500, that "the Pope had borrowed, at great cost, during the last few days, several thousand ducats to send to France, as he wishes the Duchesse de Valentinois to come to Rome." But now, Capello goes on to acquaint his illustrious correspondents with certain difficulties which seem to have suddenly presented themselves with regard to what appeared on the surface to be a perfectly simple and straightforward undertaking. Nothing but the awaited birth of her child could apparently have delayed the fulfilment of the Pope's wishes, coinciding as they did with the heart's desire of the young wife, and such a delay would only be temporary. Opposition, however, suddenly came from the most unexpected quarter, namely, from the French court itself.

"Things are shaping themselves in such a way," says Capello, "that there are strong suspicions that the Duchess may be forbidden to come." The Pope at least held those suspicions to be well founded, for he gave explicit instructions to the courier whom he entrusted with the mission that "the money was not to be paid over to the Duchess unless it was made clear that she was allowed to start on her journey."

The situation presents some puzzling features. What right or reason had Louis and Anne to detain

their pliant tool and victim from the side of the husband on whom they had bestowed her? To what fresh move in the game of a crooked policy was she now to be sacrificed? Had Louis already repented of his rash alliance with the Borgia? Had he already some faint intuition of the "nasty tricks" for which he was to take revenge not many years later on the only Borgia on whom he could lay hand at the moment? Did he deem it advisable, in the light of that intuition, to keep Charlotte d'Albret under his eye, as a possible gage of her husband's good faith with himself? Was Charlotte the sacrifice to be Charlotte the hostage? Of the effect of even such a possibility as the detention of the Duchess in France, when her presence was desired by her father-in-law in Rome, Capello at least was in no doubt. "If she is not allowed to come," he writes, "it will be held here to be a clear sign of the ill-will and unfriendly disposition of the Most Christian King towards the Pope and the Duke."

Charlotte herself, it is probable, did not see her new rôle all at once. But to others it was plain from the first. Those who had sold her, for purposes of their own, would indeed keep their word to her, in part. She would be treated with all the honours due to the rank which they had secured to her. She would take her place, in the Queen's household, among the princesses of the blood royal, and bear the title of "cousin" of Anne de Bretagne. But she would be a prisoner, a pledge of Cesare Borgia's good conduct towards his French allies, though she would have the whole realm of France for her prison-house. She would not realise her captivity at once. She would shed, it might well be, a few hot tears of disappointment at the postponement of her

dearly desired journey ; but it was only a postponement—of that both her husband's messages, and the easily given promises of her sovereigns would assure her. And then, she had the new, wonderful treasure of her child to charm and console her. The miracle of motherhood was the best balm for grief, and that miracle had been worked for her.

There was work, also, ready to her hand in her husband's duchy and county of Valentinois and Diois, where she must show herself worthy of the trust he had committed to her charge. It was probably, therefore, immediately after the birth of her child, which took place in the early part of 1500, that the young Duchess, taking up her residence at Issoudun, already dear to her because of her sick man who had sojourned there a few months before, assumed the government of Cesare Borgia's French estates.

Is the Tour Blanche, now enclosed within the garden of the Hôtel de Ville, all that remains of the residence of the Duchesse de Valentinois for the four years prior to her removal to La Motte Feuilly ? Not even tradition answers. We know, at least, that her life there was not all unhappy ; she had her child ; hope was always at her heart ; and Issoudun was close to Bourges, the home of the saintly Jeanne de Valois.

To the researches of M. Pélassier in the Italian Archives we owe the discovery of an interesting document which seems to prove that there was occasional communication between Cesare and his wife, at least during the earlier years of their separation. The document in question is preserved in the State Archives of Venice, and relates to a request made by the Duc de Valentinois that the Signoria

of the Republic would allow certain goods, destined as a present to the Duchess, to pass out of the city free of all duty, such goods consisting of a selection of the various products for which the Republic was famous at that date.

“The Signoria having just learnt,” runs the document, “from the Reverend the Apostolic Legate and Orator of the Illustrious Lord, the Duke of Valentinois, that he asks for permission to despatch from our city free of all duty and without payment of any custom the following goods for the use of his wife, and because it is well to show all love and benevolence towards the said Lord, notwithstanding that the custom on the said goods amounts to more than 51 ducats, from the information which we have, it will therefore be voted that the said orator be permitted to carry the said goods out of the city without payment of duty, and we will despatch to the said Lord a schedule satisfying him that the Signoria will defray the said duty out of the funds of the city, in order that the forms of our laws may be observed.”

The goods were as follows :

Polished white wax candles, 1,300 lire.

White comfits, 3,000 lire.

Fine sweetmeats (“zuchari fini”), 800 lire.

Spices of several sorts, to the value of 180 ducats.

Preserves in syrup, three cases.

Oranges and lemons, 3,000.

Six pipes of Malmsey.

Several pieces of cloth (20 *braccia*—yards).

One hundred and twenty-seven votes are recorded in favour of the transaction, nineteen being against it, and one member of the Council abstaining from voting.

The art of the confectioner had been brought to such a pitch of costly and ingenious perfection at this date that it was found necessary to impose certain statutory restrictions on the flights of fancy which Venice had hitherto permitted her veritable artists in sugar to essay. The latter, however, were not slow to discover various methods of evading these economic decrees, which forbade the use at feasts and banquets of "any ornaments of sugar and *confitures*, except marzipan and ordinary dainties."

That the interference of the State was by no means unnecessary may be gathered from the accounts which have come down to us of some sixteenth-century Venetian collations. Beatrice d'Este describes one such entertainment at which she counted 300 different objects made of sugar, besides an "infinite variety of other confections." At a collation offered a few years later to Henri III., King of France and Poland, all the table appointments, dishes, plates, spoons, forks, were all of sugar, the royal guest evincing considerable astonishment when his table-napkin crumbled to pieces between his hands on his attempting to unfold it. At the conclusion of the repast 260 figures made of sugar were distributed among the ladies who were present. Statues of marzipan were a frequent form of table decoration, hung round with gilded sugar-plums in the shape of the tags of an aiguillette.

Spices had come into general use in Venice at this date owing to the constant commercial intercourse between the Republic and the East. Amongst those in general use, most of which were probably included in the Borgian box of "goodies," were cinnamon, pepper, cloves, nutmeg, and ginger. These

were generally known as "épices de cuisine," or "chamber spicery," comprising dried fruit, bonbons, and confitures.

Some of the drageoirs which figure in the "Inventaire" of Charlotte d'Albret assume a new dignity—almost pathos—when we recall the fact that in some of these exquisite triumphs of the craftsman's skill the Borgia's gift of sweetmeats of Venice were most certainly destined to repose, even as from that crystal ewer, set with six sapphires, and seventeen pearls, she poured the Malmsey wine, perchance, which was to grow bitter in the tasting, because he might not toast her beauty as he took it from her hand. Did she know, did he remember, that six bottles of Malmsey and a box of sugar-plums were betrothal offerings in the Venice of their day?

What moment of memory, we would fain ask, though no answer comes, moved that strange soul of Cesare Borgia to recollection of that lonely, faithful figure, keeping vigil, destined never to find its earthly close, in her stately solitude of La Motte Feuilley? If clue there may be to the impulse which sent the gift of Venetian dainties across the Alps, may we not seek it in the date of the invoice which apprised the Duc de Valentinois of their despatch? For it was December 18, 1501, about the time, that is to say, of the marriage festivities attendant on the last bridal of Madonna Lucrezia. Who shall say what half-faded picture of his own scarcely remembered wedding in far-off Touraine leapt into pristine brilliancy for a moment in those days when all Rome, following the example, as foul as it was frivolous, of the occupant of the Chair of St. Peter, ran crazy with delight in the train of the Estensian embassy sent to conduct the Pope's heiress to that

Ferrara where she was to die in poetic odour of sanctity, as yet undreamed of ? Was it some sudden vision of realisation of the sharp contrast between Lucrezia of the "hair like the sun," in her "wonderful costume of white and gold, with a green head-dress, all studded with the famous pearls she loved so well," and that pure, beautiful other bride of Blois, that underlay Cesare's gift ? Did some sweet, swift vision of that "angel of gentleness and innocence " thrust itself for a fleeting instant beneath the mask in which he stalked with Cardinal Ippolito d'Este and his brother Ferrando through the streets of Rome that needed not the fall of night to darken at his passing by ?

There is true Borgian cynicism in his offering, for all its sweetness. It was like a Borgia to toss a handful of sweetmeats into the lap of her who wept above her child's cradle for the husband she was to see no more. Surely, toys like these of the confectioner's fancy and fashioning would teach any woman to forget that life was sometimes bitter. Men like the Borgia, masters in the craft of cruelty, will be confident to the end of time in the magic of sickly simples like these to heal the wounds, however grievous, which they glory in inflicting.

## CHAPTER XVI

A royal house-party—Blois of the days of Louis XII.—The Duchesse de Valentinois as a carrier of comfits—The era of the drageoir.

CHARLOTTE D'ALBRET took part in a picturesque ceremonial at the court of France in the year 1501-1502, the occasion being the visit of the Archduke Philippe of Austria and his consort, Jeanne, afterwards to be known to history as La Folle, on their way to Spain, the object of their coming being to discuss, at the invitation of the French sovereigns, the proposed betrothal of their children, Claude of France, then a mere infant, and Charles of Austria, afterwards the Emperor Charles V. This matrimonial alliance, inspired by the ambition of Anne de Bretagne, which would have proved disastrous for France at least, was happily destined to remain a dream dissolved ; but it afforded a pretext, nevertheless, for one of the most splendid royal receptions ever held within the walls of the Château of Blois.

The details of this royal house-party have been handed down to us by one who was evidently an eye-witness, and who is generally identified with Jean d'Auton. The Château was then nearing the completion of the wing which was to bear the name of Louis XII, "so sumptuous in its new appearance, that it bespoke the work of a king." Through the old chronicler's eyes we gaze once more upon the

delicate fretwork of white stone standing out against the brilliant background of deep-red bricks, the statues in all the beauty of their poses, the twin devices of the fleur-de-lys and the porcupine and ermine showered, in colour or in carving, over the whole edifice, the gold and purple and azure of the stained-glass windows, the motto of the House of Orléans, "Peaceable to the humble, terrible to the proud," beneath the feet of the Father of his people, set upon his charger with a royal canopy overhead, as the statue which replaced the original still stands above the entrance to his wing to-day.

The interior of the Château was as worthy to receive the greatest of guests as the exterior was to welcome their approach. Magnificent tapestries covered the walls; costly carpets covered the floors. The chimneypieces, lending themselves at that period to the richest ornamentation, were proud to bear the armorial devices of the King and Queen, or the linked letters of their names, alternating with figures in high relief, all painted or touched with gold. The furniture of the rooms was worthy of its setting, splendidly carved; whilst the beds in the sleeping apartments had glistening stuffs for coverlets, silk, or gold or silver tissue, and damask.

The hall in which the King sat to receive his illustrious guests (his bedroom) was richly hung with arras; before the fireplaces, on a great carpet, was a chair of state. Standing round the royal host were the seven-year-old Comte d'Angoulême, afterwards François I., the Cardinal d'Amboise, and M. de Brienne. On arriving at the door, the Archduke removed his cap, and M. de Brienne announced him, with the words: "Sire, here is Monsieur the Archduke."

To which the King responded, with a smile, "In other words, a noble prince." The Archduke made three obeisances before reaching the King, the first at the moment when he appeared in the doorway, the King rising at the same time, and advancing to meet him, taking short steps. At the second obeisance, the King removed his cap, and at the third he embraced the Archduke, saying a few words of welcome to him in low tones. The King then covered his head again, but the Archduke could not be prevailed upon to do so, and they then entered into conversation.

The Archduchess, meanwhile, had been separated from her husband on their approach to the Château, by the crowds of persons waiting to see them pass; but, arriving at the entrance in due course, she was received, in the Queen's name, by the Dame de Nevers, Mademoiselle de Montpensier, Mademoiselle de Candale, Madame de Rohan, and a great number of the other ladies of the court, who conducted her, first, to the King's presence. On entering the apartment, she was asked if she would kiss the King, the mode of greeting then being the kiss on the lips; but as it was not the Spanish custom, the Archduchess decided that she would not do so. However, on the advice of the Bishop of Cordova, to whom the question seems to have been referred, she consented to kiss both the King and the little Comte d'Angoulême. The former met her at the door, breaking off in the middle of the conversation with the Archduke and his courtiers to do so, and, baring his head, kissed her before she had made her third curtsy, and then, placing her on his right hand, led her up the hall. Having done so, he said, with true kingly tact and consideration, "Madame, I know that you would

prefer to be with the ladies. Do you go now to see my wife, and leave us men here."

The Archduchess was then conducted by the suite appointed to escort her to the Queen's apartments, the progress being attended with some difficulty, owing to the pressure of the crowd, which seems to have invaded the Château itself, in the corridors and on the stairs.

Anne de Bretagne awaited her guest seated in a chair of state before the fireplace, under a dais, attended by many great personages, amongst them the Prince of Orange, the faithful friend and counsellor of her child's rule in her beloved duchy. At the approach of the Archduchess, the Queen rose, her illustrious visitor making a slight curtsy, whilst the Duchesse de Bourbon, who presented her to the Queen, curtsied to the ground, and then made two more obeisances. The Queen took one or two steps forward, and, kissing the Archduchess, evinced great pleasure in welcoming her to France. At the edge of the carpet were the Duchesse d'Alençon and the Comtesse d'Angoulême, Louise of Savoy, mother of the young Comte, while farther back stood Mademoiselle de Foix-Candale and the Comtesse de Dunois. The Archduchess kissed all these ladies, and would have proceeded to salute all the others in like fashion, as they stood, ranged round the room, but the Duchesse de Bourbon intervened, assuring the Archduchess that it was not at all necessary, and would, moreover, take too long. This may well have been so, for the court of Anne, as we have seen, numbered more than 140 ladies. The Archduchess curtsied once more to the Queen, before withdrawing to her own apartments.

A pretty little ceremony intervened. At the

entrance to the rooms which had been assigned to the guest, the baby Princesse Claude, held by Mademoiselle de Tournon, awaited her prospective mother-in-law. The child was also attended by Madame d'Angoulême (in whose house she had been born, and who was actually to stand in the same relation to her as then seemed finally allotted to the Archduchess), Mademoiselle Anne d'Alençon, and the Duchesse de Valentinois (whose own little Louise was then a little over a year old), by Madame de Tournon, and four or five other ladies of "noble mien." There were also in attendance about twenty-four little girls, the eldest not thirteen, in charge of their duenna. The presentation of the small Princess was not altogether a success. Madame Claude, we are told, cried so loudly that she had to be hurried back to her nursery, which adjoined the King's apartment, and was hung with tapestry "on which were sheepfolds and little figures," with inscriptions—probably nursery rhymes of the period. The little Princess's cradle had a canopy of green damask, and her nurse, Madame de Tournon, slept in a folding or camp bedstead, in her room.

After a brief rest in her apartments, the Archduchess was shown over the Château by Madame de Vendôme. The hall (*salle des armes*), through which the procession passed from the royal presence to the rest of the rooms, was hung with tapestry representing the Destruction of Troy. At one end was a chapel with a portable altar, that, probably, at which the Duchesse de Valentinois had been married to Cesare Borgia. The chapel or oratory was also similarly hung. The King's Chamber, where he dined and received his guests, was hung with tapestry depicting a battle scene. Over the chimneypiece was a dais

of rich cloth of gold. The Queen's great hall was hung with historical and battle pictures in needle-work, and the dais was of cloth of gold, like the King's. In the Queen's sleeping apartments the tapestry represented "strange birds and beasts and foreign landscapes." In it was a camp bedstead, furnished with cloth of gold, and a coverlet of crimson damask.

The royal guest-rooms were furnished with equal magnificence, and from the ceiling of one apartment two silver chandeliers, "marvellously large," and in the shape of a cross, to hold four candles, were suspended by silver chains. In the bedrooms two camp bedsteads stood side by side, curtained with gold stuff, the hangings of the walls being of cloth of gold worked with designs in black and red. The linings of the bed-furniture were of white damask, and the canopy of red and yellow taffetas. At the farther end of the room was another bed, furnished like the others, but without a canopy. On both beds were cloth-of-gold coverlets and fine linen sheets.

The floor coverings and the cloths spread on the dressers were of the same rich material, as was also the upholstery of the chair of state which stood beside the bed. This chair was wonderfully carved, the fringes of the covering thrown over it being of gold and silver, and of Italian workmanship. Besides another state chair by the fireplace, there were plenty of cushions to sit upon. We read in old French writers of "cushions for damsels to sit upon," and of "fine cushions to seat ladies who come unexpectedly" (to call). Charlotte d'Albret's inventory furnishes us, as we shall see, with numerous examples of these cushion-seats. When Anne de Bretagne received guests whose rank entitled them to be seated in her presence, cushions were brought for-

ward by the pages in attendance and placed at the Queen's feet.

Two other rooms completed the suite in which Philip and Jeanne were lodged. These were furnished in crimson velvet worked with crowned K's and A's (Karolus and Anne), recalling the first queenship of Anne de Bretagne. There were several stools covered with green velvet in these apartments, and a silken coverlet on the bed. This was specially admired by the Archduchess for its rich and delicate workmanship. The last room of all was hung with crimson satin embroidered with the Queen's device of the *cordelière* and the arms of Bretagne, and trimmed with fringe. The apartment of Madame de Halluyn, the Archduchess's first lady-in-waiting, was hung with grey and yellow damask, embroidered with large velvet S's. These were the mourning hangings of Valentine de Milan, Duchesse d'Orléans.

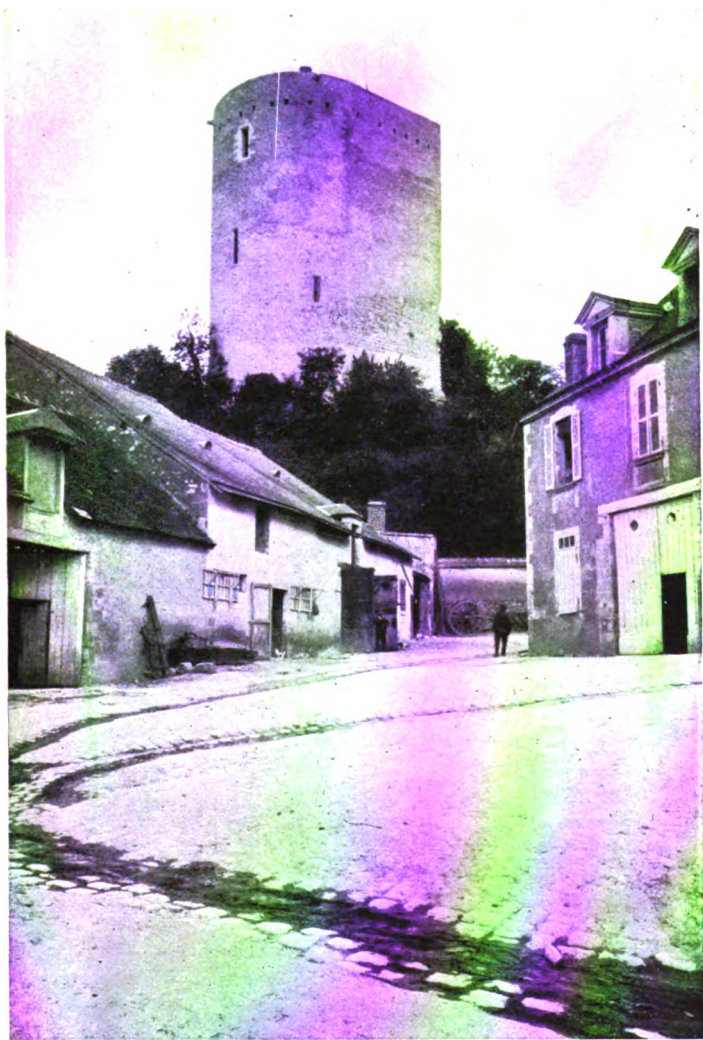
The Archduke supped with M. de Nevers, M. de Ligny, and the Count Palatine. The King retired early, having nothing but bread and water for supper, the next day being the Feast of Nôtre Dame des Advents. The Archduchess remained in her room, where she was served, about seven o'clock, with the following ceremonial:

First came one of the King's stewards, then six little pages, clad in the Queen's livery of yellow damask, with stripes of crimson velvet, each carrying a golden candlestick with a taper of virgin wax. After them came Madame de Bourbon, with a large golden box or coffret, full of sweetmeats, followed by Madame d'Angoulême, the bearer of a similar box containing finger-napkins. A third golden box was carried by Madame de Nevers, the contents in this case being gold-handled knives and forks. Last in the pro-

cession came the Duchesse de Valentinois and Made-moiselle de Foix, each the bearer of a drageoir of great size, one of gold, exquisitely wrought, and the other of silver-gilt. We are at the era of the drageoir or comfit-dish, of which our modern bonbonnière is but the degenerate representative, and which played such a graceful and important rôle in the social life of the times of Anne de Bretagne and Charlotte d'Albret. The receptacle in question varied in shape. We find it described in ancient inventories, now as a basin, now as a covered cup with handles, or a dish, but it was always presented on a tray, with two small tongs and spoons to take up the spices or fruits which it contained, together with little napkins, to wipe the fingers after eating them.

It was the custom, at the conclusion of a repast, or, as in this case, on the arrival of distinguished guests, for the ladies of the family or the household to offer "chamber spicery" consisting of confitures, preserved fruits, and bonbons à la mode, in the drageoir. When not in use, the dragenall, as it was known in England—"a vessel," says Hallowell, "for dragées, or small comfits"—was the most conspicuous and generally the most exquisite ornament in the living-room, where it occupied the place of honour on the dresser or buffet on which the gold and silver ware of the lord or lady was displayed. Goldsmith, jeweller, and enameller delighted to lavish all the resources of their art on these elegant receptacles.

The ladies who were deputed to offer the drageoirs to the Archduchess were followed by five or six gentlemen, each carrying two dishes full of preserved fruits, the procession being closed by the Queen's apothecary, bearing wax candles and a golden candlestick. The gentlemen remained outside the



**THE TOUR BLANCHE.**  
From a photograph by Dagois, Issoudun.



door, while the noble dames carried the various items of the dainty repast within, depositing them now on the dresser, now on the bed ! The bed and toilet linen was brought in with the same ceremony, as well as the vessels for heating water, the warming-pans and wash-hand-basins all being of silver.

The porters and tapissiers of the Château brought in a large coffer covered with green velvet, containing the following articles : Four mirrors framed in silver-gilt, three vessels in which were the sponges and *lessives*, three bedroom candlesticks, three pairs of clothes-whisks, the handles covered with crimson velvet, three little pincushions made of crimson satin, and plenty of pins in papers. Three other coffers contained combs, several candles, a sheet (to stand upon while dressing) of ordinary holland, and a liberal supply of nightcaps. This part of the ceremony was only gone through on the first night of the visit, but the presentation of the "very excellent and magnificent sweetmeats" was repeated on each of the five nights.

The weather during this visit proved most unpropitious, seriously interfering with all the outdoor entertainments which had been arranged ; but there was much gaiety indoors, the ladies dancing for three hours at a time on most days. Magnificent and frequently changed toilettes were worn by the Queen and her ladies. On the first day, when Anne received the Archduke after Mass, she appeared in a robe of cloth of gold, trimmed with sable, attended by twelve ladies in the same rich fabric, and by thirty demoiselles in tawny velvet, trimmed with the above-mentioned fur. At Mass on the Sunday the Queen wore white brocaded satin, with sable, her ladies being in crimson velvet, some trimmed with sable, others with black lambskin.

## CHAPTER XVII

"The hope of unaccomplished years"—Cesare has other dreams—  
The châtelaine of the Tour Blanche—Issoudun of the days of  
Charlotte d'Albret—Eternal gratitude of the Borgias towards  
Anne de Bretagne—Her fruitless efforts to recall Charlotte to  
court—The Duchesse de Valentinois at the second coronation  
of her "cousin"—A pageant of fair women.

ACCORDING to M. Yriarte, there was some question in 1502 of the Duchesse de Valentinois accomplishing her ardently desired journey to Italy, opportunity and an escort being afforded at that date by the imminent departure for Rome of her brother, Cardinal d'Albret. She might also have undertaken the voyage in the train of her kinswoman, Anne de Foix, her fellow pupil in the "school of virtue" of Anne de Bretagne, who had secured for her a royal bridegroom in the person of Ladislaus of Hungary.

We should almost have expected to find Charlotte d'Albret amongst the train of noble ladies who attended the bride on her royal progress, but her name does not appear in the list. It is possible that the grave illness which M. Yriarte gives as the cause of the final postponement of her journey, also intervened to prevent her travelling to Italy in the illustrious company of the young Queen-Elect of Hungary.<sup>1</sup> Cardinal d'Albret, we know, carried

<sup>1</sup> The bride, who quitted France heartbroken, loving and beloved by a noble gentleman, from whose arms she was rudely torn by the imperious will of her royal mistress, who was actually tenderly attached

out his intention alone, for we read of his being received with all the honours due to his rank, if not to his relationship to the Pope's son, by the French ambassador, and several of his brother Cardinals, at the Ponte Milvio.

The year in which the young Duchess's cherished dream of reunion with her adored husband seemed on the verge of radiant fulfilment was at once a busy and a brilliant one for the Borgia family. It is doubtful whether Charlotte d'Albret would have fitted into either aspect.

The year opened with the splendid departure of Lucrezia Borgia for her court of Ferrara, to which she bore her princess's dowry of 100,000 ducats and a reputation which might well have caused her ducal bridegroom to recoil even from her child-like beauty, had it not been that in so doing he must have fallen back upon the point of Cesare Borgia's sword. The protection of his frontier of Romagna, which, Sismondi points out, was the immediate fruit to Cesare of the Ferrarese alliance, left Lucrezia's brother free to pursue his designs against Tuscany and Umbria.

Leaving Rome June 13, 1502, we see him flash, a startling, sinister figure, from Perugia to Cagli in Urbino, darkening the terrified towns through which he passed with his company of paid brigands, whose lives were in turn, within a few months, to be required by their ferocious master as the price of their treachery. At the gates of Tuscany he received sharp commands from his royal ally of France to desist from molesting the republic of Florence, which was under the protection of the French King.

to her, only lived to wear her dearly purchased crown for one year, and to give an heir to the kingdom in which she lived as though in exile to the last hour of her life in Hungary.

With an outward show of submission, but burning with a fury of impatient resentment at this unexpected check, Cesare turned aside to Camerino, which he entered by a trick, and, venting his anger of the moment on the first available though innocent victim, he took Julius Cæsar of Varano and two of his sons prisoners, and ordered them to be immediately strangled.

His crippling, yet indispensable, French alliance trembled, meanwhile, in the balance. Louis, on his arrival at Asti, was greeted by a storm of petitions, from all quarters of Italy, that he would take such steps as seemed good to him to curb the outrageous pretensions and projects of his ally. Not only the rôle of Cesare, but the very sovereignty of his father, seemed to be threatened by the howling of this tempest of retribution. The Borgias, however, had their safeguard at the very side of the French King himself. Georges d'Amboise, with his eye ever on the coveted tiara, was an easy prey to the wiles and flattery of its present wearer. It was enough to whisper into his royal master's ear of the untrustworthiness of Maximilian, of the danger to France of the Spanish-Neapolitan conflict, of the jealousy of Venice, of the powerful resources which could be confidently reckoned on by any ally of Alexander VI. and his son. Travelling post-haste from Rome, Cesare arrived at Milan August 3, to be received by the vacillating tool of his minister with open arms and every token of affectionate regard "to the despair of those who had implored for justice to be executed against him."

Flushed with insolence and triumph, Cesare dictated terms of a fresh alliance of his House with France, whose troops were recalled or despatched as he willed, to Tuscany, or to Naples ; and leaving

behind him the execrations of the whole of Italy that was not mesmerised or otherwise at the mercy of the Borgia, Louis set sail for France in the autumn of 1502. As his parting proof of renewed faith in his worthless ally, Louis bestowed upon Cesare the loan of 300 French lances, to be employed in reducing to submission Bologna, Perugia, and Citta di Castello, and the destruction of the families of the Bentivoglio, the Baglioni, and Vitellozzo Vitelli. The miscarriage of the conspiracy directed by the latter against the Borgia ended in the massacre of Sinigaglia, belauded by Machiavelli. The year closed with Cesare a conqueror still, and the richer by a yearly revenue of 12,000 ducats, guaranteed by the vanquished Bentivoglio.

Fortune, meanwhile, seemed to be deserting the French arms ; it was the moment when the Duc de Valentinois might begin to feel himself a free man, and to look around him for fresh, and still more alluring alliances. What space on that glowing horizon, we ask once more, for the less alluring vision of wife and child ?

We may dismiss as legend the theory that has been sometimes held by historians that Charlotte d'Albret made a last desperate effort to rejoin her husband in Italy, and actually arrived as far as Naples on her journey, where she was turned back by order of Cesare himself. Shadow and doubt, indeed, darken all those years which followed the departure of the Duc de Valentinois from France, save for the brief intervals when, as we have indicated already, the curtain lifts. At Issoudun, and there only, we may think of her as making a home for her little daughter, Louise, and herself, from 1501 to 1504.

In addition to its exalted rank as the second royal

town in Berry, Issoudun of the days of Charlotte d'Albret was at the height of its commercial prosperity. Within its walls, nestling under the protection of its White Tower, was a thriving colony of craftsmen. The traffic in wool and hides decided the destinies of the greater part of the inhabitants, whose avocations were chiefly those of weavers, fullers (their labours lightened by the purity of the water always available close at hand), cloth-makers, drapers, mercers, wool-combers, carders, tanners, curriers, shoemakers, and glovers. Issoudun was to retain, until the close of the eighteenth century, its ancient reputation for the excellent quality of its cloth and serge, while its kid gloves, at that date, still enjoyed an almost European fame. The rich pastures through which the limpid Théols ran like a silver ribbon afforded grazing for vast flocks, to which the town owed its notable trade in wool. Merchants from all quarters were attracted to its fairs, of which eight were held every year.

Only second to the renown of Issoudun for wool was that of its fame for "good and excellent wines." Four of the vineyards which encircled the town were specially reputed, those, namely, known as "Crève-Cœur," "Champ-fort," "Haute Roche," and "Pied Rouau" (afterwards corrupted to "Pierrots"). Vine-dressers and vineyard owners frequently appear on the roll of monastic rentals and benefactions still preserved amongst the archives of the town.

To all this busy population, countless spiritual activities were constantly ministering, the sick and poor being carefully tended in its fine hospital, while the still more unhappy victims of leprosy, not yet rooted out of Europe, found a refuge in the lazaret-house of St. Ladre, patron saint of lepers. Issoudun

had besides various other religious establishments within its walls. With all of these centres of beneficent activity, Charlotte d'Albret would have had almost daily opportunity, during her residence in the Maison du Roi within the Tour Blanche, of becoming intimately acquainted. She retained her practical sympathy with their labours, as we know from the provisions of her will, long after she had quitted Issoudun. The most ancient foundation of the town was that of the Franciscans, dating from 1250, their monastery having long vanished, leaving not a trace of its site behind. Within the actual enclosure of the Tour Blanche was the monastery of Nôtre Dame of Issoudun, other monasteries being those of the Minims (an offshoot of the Franciscans) and the Grey Friars.

Charlotte's relations seem to have bestowed upon her as little thought and sympathy as worldly-minded people in all ages vouchsafe to those whom the hand of God has touched. They shrink, as with a spurious fastidiousness, from all contact with a sorrow which they are incapable of understanding. It was so with the d'Albrets. They had disposed of Charlotte, and were very well satisfied, at that date, with their share of the blood-money. If she chose to bury herself alive in the wilds of Berry because more pressing business kept her husband from her side, that was no affair of theirs. She was still free of the court ; to their own certain knowledge, Anne de Bretagne had made repeated efforts to draw her "cousin" the Duchesse de Valentinois, from her retirement, taking great credit to herself, as appears from a letter written to her by Pope Alexander VI. on August 26, 1503, for her graciousness towards the wilful exile. For her goodwill and kindly thought of the consort of his dear son,

Alexander assures his "dearest daughter in Christ," that both he and the Duke are "eternally grateful."

But Charlotte was not to be lured from her harbour of refuge. There was no attraction for her at court. Twice, and twice only, so far as we know, she left solitude for the world after Cesare Borgia quitted France, though the young Duchesse de Valentinois, still in the flower of her youth, and a great lady, might well have found some anodyne for her mourning for her mate amid the gay scenes she had so lightly renounced.

But Charlotte d'Albret was of finer quality than the easily consoled. She bore Anne, besides, no malice, but her eyes had been opened. She was no longer the docile tool, the passive instrument, across whose unsuspecting and unsullied heart popes and kings had passed to a shameful triumph. She had indeed learned to love the worthless husband to whom they had sold her, but she would never forget that she had been sold. With the quiet firmness of a proud woman, hurt to the quick by an unforgivable wrong, she resolutely refused to be won back by any bribe of gifts or titles of honourable endearment to the shambles where she had been sacrificed. All "cousinly" advances were met with cold rejection, even though accompanied by queenly gifts. Between herself and Anne de Bretagne there was the impassable gulf of an irreparable wrong. We find her nevertheless at the second coronation of Anne in November, 1504.

In the inventory of the Duchesse de Valentinois, made ten years later, at the Château of La Motte Feuilly, there was set down by Maître Agoberd, at the bidding of his superior, Maître Jacques Dorsanne, the following item: "A hackney saddle of the late Madame, covered with black velvet, with all the

harness also covered with the same." Charlotte d'Albret rode no more, that is to say, in a queen's colours, and her palfrey, laying aside its trappings of crimson velvet, must mourn with her.

Like another Valentine Visconti, her breaking heart might well have cried out, in the lament of the Milanese heiress, "*Rien ne m'est plus, plus ne m'est rien !*" If, as Valentine's chronicler entreats, "all noble hearts should take pity on her who bore this device," how much more on our derelict Duchess ! She came indeed at Anne's bidding, to attend her to her second "joyful coronation," but on her own conditions. Cloth of gold and crimson velvet were not for her whose husband "was a prisoner in Spain," nor, she might well have added, in her heart at least, for the friend of Jeanne de Valois, of whose cruel destiny she must have been reminded at every incident throughout the progress of that gorgeous ceremonial. Almost alone amongst that "great train of duchesses, countesses, dames, and demoiselles," the wife of Cesare Borgia was robed in black velvet, with sable and jennet trimmings. The account of the Queen's coronation is quoted in Dom Morice's "*History of Bretagne*" from "an ancient book belonging to Monseigneur the Bishop of Arras." The title-page runs as follows :

*"Comment la Reine à St. Denis sacrée,  
Fort dignement en grande solennité,  
Pareillement comme était accoutrée  
Quand à Paris elle fit son entrée,  
J'ai tout écrit en cette petite traité."*

On Saturday, November 17, 1504, says our author, the Queen set out from Vincennes to receive for the second time her "well-merited sacring, to be crowned in triumph, honour, excellent, glorious, and most

happy magnificence." Her train was carried by the most excellent Demoiselle Françoise d'Alençon, after whom walked Madame Anne de France, Duchesse de Bourbon, "dressed in neither silk nor velvet, but in the very best black cloth, furred with minever with a mantle of Limouse." The Duchess rode in a litter of black velvet, open in front, drawn by two great horses caparisoned with black velvet, led by two grooms, two pages being also in attendance in the same sable array. The "very noble and virtuous Marguerite de Lorraine, Duchesse d'Alençon," rode in a litter also, wearing a similar robe to that of the Duchesse de Bourbon. "In gentle and constant gravity" went Mademoiselle Suzanne de Bourbon, daughter of Anne de Beaujeu, then newly betrothed to Charles d'Alençon. Her robe was of cloth of gold. Fourth in the procession came "the very estimable, worthy, and virtuous Dame, Madame Charlotte d'Albret, Duchesse de Valentinois," riding a hackney, with the black velvet trappings of her inventory.

The ladies who followed her included Madame Anne, second daughter of the House of Alençon, Mesdemoiselles Anne and Renée de Bourbon, Madame Marie de Luxembourg, Comtesse de Vendôme, the Comtesse de Nevers, Mademoiselle Germaine de Foix, Madame de Ravenstein, Mesdemoiselles Anne and Marguerite de Rohan, Mademoiselle de Saluces, Mademoiselle de Lautrec, all sumptuously attired in crimson velvet, trimmed with sable, and surcoats of cloth of gold. Magdelaine de Perier, Dame de la Guerche, the Queen's chief lady-in-waiting, walked by herself, and, following her, Madame la Provoste de Paris—Jacqueline Destruc, stately in black velvet, with a surcoat of cloth of gold, "frizé, very rich." The Queen's maids of honour, girls from sixteen to eighteen

years of age, were in charge of their duenna, the wise and worthy Dame Domdes. Ladies in crimson brocaded satin rode on white palfreys, which were led by lackeys in liveries of yellow damask and black doublets. The loveliest ladies of the most illustrious Houses of France rode in suspended carriages upholstered in cloth of gold, and bearing the Queen's device. Some of these ladies wore violet, others crimson velvet, with Lombardy *panne* trimmings.

At the great supper which followed, the Queen sat at a marble table, "in singular magnificence," on a chair of state upholstered in cloth of gold, beneath a canopy of the same. The Duchesse de Valentinois was one of the four ladies who sat at the Queen's table, "to bear her company." At other tables the ladies were seated according to their rank, the noblest gentlemen in the kingdom serving as stewards, pantlers, carvers, and cupbearers. M. de Lautrec waited on the Queen, clad in crimson velvet and sable, having under him M. d'Orval, Charlotte's kinsman, Jean d'Albret, as pantler, in grey satin, with two esquires. The Infant of Navarre, the Queen's uncle, was carver, assisted by an esquire; M. de Vendôme, in crimson velvet, was cupbearer. There were also twenty-five pages. To each lady was allotted her steward, pantler, cupbearer, and carver, the service being so perfectly in order as to evoke admiration from all. "To see how they served, without one getting in the other's way, was a thing well ordered, and most beautiful to behold." Nor was the company, "very great, and of the best," less worthy of note. The city of Paris had contributed "the most beautiful and gorgeous of its dames and demoiselles," in no degree overshadowed by the rank and beauty of the nobler ladies of the Queen's court.

## CHAPTER XVIII

The manor of La Motte Feuilly—Its lords and ladies—The Duchesse de Valentinois becomes its châtelaine—The fatal garden—The Borgia sups with death—Cesare as an invalid—His convalescence—Wild hope of reunion—The captive of Ischia—Not a home, but a hermitage.

THE ancient fief of La Motte Feuilly, which was to be the dower-house of Charlotte d'Albret, and the scene of her last hours, emerges from the mists of antiquity, under the name of La Motte de Folli, in the second half of the eleventh century, when it was carried into the family of Palestel, lords of Dun-le-Palesteau, by the marriage of Roger, fifth of the name, with Guiburge, Dame de Sainte-Sevère and de la Motte de Folli. Their son, Hélié, was succeeded in the lordship by a daughter, another Guiburge, who became the wife of Hugues, Vicomte de Brosse, in 1230. A second Hugues followed, then a Roger de Brosse, whilst a third Hugues, lord of La Motte de Folli, from 1270 to 1293, having by his second wife, Aënor de Brenne, an only daughter, Aënor de Brosse, bequeathed to her the seigniory still known as La Motte de Folli. She became the wife of Eudes de Sully, Seigneur de Beaujeu. Their son, another Eudes, married Jeanne de Tors, and changed the name of his lordship to that of La Motte de Suely or Sully. He lived from 1304 to 1327, and again there was a lady of La Motte, Aënor de Seuly or Sully, who married Dreux, or Drouin de Voudenay,

about 1350. Their son, Sévin, was the father of a second Drouin, husband of Jeanne de Linières, with whom the history of the "castle and stronghold" of La Motte Feuilly actually begins.

It was constructed under his direction at the beginning of the fifteenth century, a typical fortified castle of the period. "The Renaissance," as M. Bonnaffé aptly remarks, "with its coquettish decorations, had not yet passed that way." "The ancient lordship of La Motte Feuilly," says another sympathetic French writer, "has dwindled in our day to a small village of about 126 inhabitants." We choose M. Edmond Planchut for our cicerone as we turn our thoughts to that which must for ever stand as a shrine to all who remember what sweet shade it once housed for ten years; for he has caught the true spirit of the pilgrim wherein to worthily approach it. We follow him along the "shady daisy-dotted path" which he indicates to us, and, like him, we find ourselves at once transported to the Past. He points out to us the entrance gateway, with its battlemented façade, the deep grooves which once served for the rise and fall of the vanished drawbridge, the lofty towers, the crenelated outer wall, the loopholes, donjon, and watch-tower which stamp it fortress rather than château, the greensward which has long filled up the ancient moat, whose waters, diverted through the leafy park, are astir with a colony of waterfowl; we will climb (in good company, with such a guide) the narrow stairway leading to the oratory, with his own reflections ringing in our ears: "How many times, in the closing days of her brief existence, must the Duchesse de Valentinois have quitted her apartments by the little nail-studded door which may still

be seen, and, mounting this very stairway, have entered here to weep and pray before the altar ! ”

He will take us into the two dimly lighted rooms on the first and second floor of the keep, with their high chimneypieces and the stone seats let into the walls beside the narrow windows. May not Charlotte d'Albret, he will pause to ask us, have sat here, gazing out towards the horizon that was never to flush rosy as her own wine of Nérac—“ *vin rosétique* ”—with hope fulfilled, its advent painting the whiteness of her wasting cheek ? He will show us, in the upper room of the donjon, “ like some immense spider in the midst of its web,” that selfsame “ stocks for prisoners ” which the conscientious worthy Maître Jacques Dorsanne duly inventoried amongst the possessions of the “ late Madame la Duchesse de Valentinois.” “ A gift, perhaps, *sui generis*,” suggests M. Planchut, “ of Cesare Borgia to his wife.” It may well be so, though Bonnaffé reminds us that “ the forked gibbet, the stocks, and the pillory were the three outward symbols of the right of life and death which went with the lordship of La Motte Feuilly.”

But the contemplation of this instrument of torture brings us too near to the thought of Cesare Borgia, even if it were not by his orders that it was placed in the tower ; it is too much akin to the dark and dreadful deeds that brand his name eternally. Let us hurry out into the open air, to wander through the nobly wooded park, to gaze between its leafy colonnades across the melancholy moorlands of Les Chaumoises, and breathe its pungent odours of gorse, broom, and rosy heather ! At the heart of the woodland domain stands a mute and venerable long-accredited witness of the sorrows of the Duchesse de

Valentinois, and, it may be, of the childish gambols of her little Louise. It is a colossal yew, with enormous roots, a centenarian four or five times over, now kept upright, like an aged and decrepit man, by props. But its vivid scarlet berries, says M. Planchut, "standing out against the sombre green of its foliage, attest that its sap is far from being exhausted."

We have now, however, to retrace our steps from La Motte the many-remembered to the circumstances which led up to the passing of the property into the hands of Cesare Borgia's deserted Duchess. Drouin de Voudenay left behind him at his death a family of one son and four daughters. The son, Claude, who became first *maître d'hôtel* to the Duc de Berry, married Jeanne de Bar, and died childless, in 1475. Interminable litigation followed; it was not until February 19, 1487, that a decree of the High Court of Parliament of Paris adjudged the disputed lordships of La Motte Feuilly, Nerez, and Fusines to the children of Jean de Culant, Seigneur de Château-neuf-sur-Cher, and to Christopher Carmonne, civil lieutenant at the Châtelet in Paris.

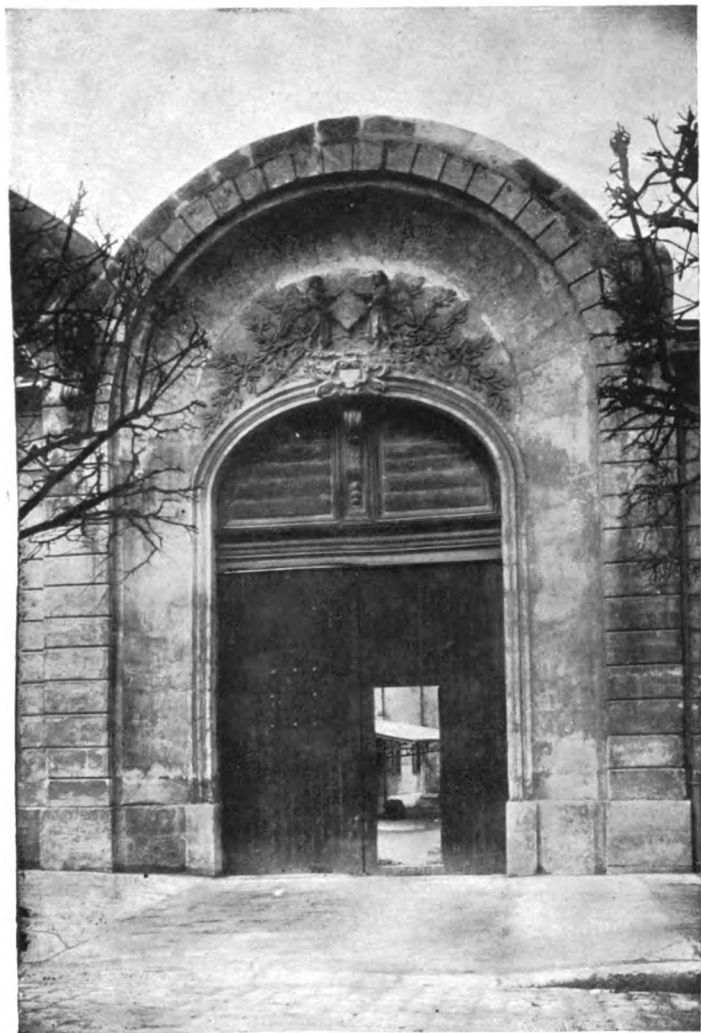
It would appear that the new owners of La Motte Feuilly were too much at variance amongst themselves to permit of any one of the number settling down peaceably at the Château, so that when so notable a buyer presented herself as the Duchesse de Valentinois, all that remained for them to do was to make the best bargain they could.

The influence of Jeanne de Valois may be traced, though perhaps remotely, in the transaction, for her former governess and guardian, Anne de Culant, afterwards Madame de Linières, was related to the family of the vendors, who may well have sought

her friendly offices in the matter, through the Duchesse de Berry, with Charlotte d'Albret. For there can be no doubt that the determining factor in Charlotte's choice of a property in the vicinity of Bourges was the affection with which she regarded the home of her saintly friend. There were other, but lesser, considerations which weighed, no doubt, with the young Duchess. At La Motte Feuilly she would have for neighbours her uncle, Jean d'Albret, Comte de Dreux and de Rethel, whose lordship of Châteaumeillant adjoined that of the de Culants; her cousin, Jean de Brosse, Louise de Bourbon, and the de la Trêmoilles.

It must have been at the moment when negotiations were pending for the purchase of La Motte Feuilly from the heirs of Louis de Culant that the prophecy of the Blessed Osanna of Mantua was fulfilled, she who had beheld that "fire of straw" which was "the lordship of the Duke of Valentino," and his state, "pass and disperse," even while as yet the Chair of St. Peter itself trembled before him. We can well imagine how his forsaken wife flung herself with an eagerness like despair into the distraction from an ever-present grieving afforded by the details and discussions involved in the transfer of the property. Better by far these dryasdust deeds and documents than the fears, of what she knew not, which pressed upon her heart.

With a near relation in the Sacred College itself, it cannot be doubted that Charlotte was kept closely in touch with the events in Rome of 1503 and 1504, which were to culminate in the catastrophe of Cesare Borgia's fall and captivity. Through the medium of Amanieu, Cardinal d'Albret, his sister would learn, we may confidently conclude, of the swift and horrible



**GATEWAY OF THE CONVENT OF THE ANNONCIADES, BOURGES.**



death, by poison designed for an unsuspecting host, of Alexander VI., and of the narrow escape of Cesare himself from the like fate. A prey to the tortures of suspense and of rebellion—if that patient heart ever grew rebel—against the hard fate that kept her from his side, Charlotte would await, with an ever-growing agony of expectation, the leisurely bulletins which her brother would despatch to her from time to time.

Never had there been an instant when that devoted heart, wrung by that perverse passion of fidelity which fate seems to reserve for those worthier of a serener destiny, ceased to follow, with straining eyes, the arresting figure of the man whose name she bore. The intensity of that gaze was to know no slackening now that the shades of her prolonged dereliction were about to deepen still more around her. The arrogant, fever-stricken invalid of Nepi, the cruel tyrant laid low in an instant, when all seemed to beckon him to ascend still loftier heights, was still her lover and her lord. In his misfortunes, says Creighton, Cesare Borgia was pitied but by few. What wealth of compassion was lavished upon him, unworthy of it all, by the wife to whom he had left nothing save his memory and their child!

“Fortune had grown too angry with him,” wrote Cesare Borgia to his captain at Forli from his Neapolitan prison. One heart only bore him no grudge. In that Rome where men had shuddered, and touched the skirts of hell itself when they thought upon that masked, sinister figure, “they spoke no more of him.” They were glad to forget him. Only one, who spoke not either, remembered, still hoping against hope. Her supreme single thought was to make a home for him at last, for him who had only known till then the splendour of palaces, the

stir of battle. All the misery of her past, it seemed to her, would be forgotten, as waters that pass away, in the realisation of that dream. His loss in Italy should prove, perchance, her gain in France, if fortune that had never frowned upon him until now should compensate them both with recompense of reunion.

So she wove her dream, while the lengthening shadows only deepened round her path. And then the last but one of the cruel blows which destiny was to rain upon that fragile figure to the end, fell upon that yearning heart. Gonsalvo de Cordova, treacherously breaking his pledged soldier's word to his captive of Ischia, had betrayed the Duc de Valentino into the hands of Spain. By a malicious freak of fortune, which has not escaped the notice of a recent writer in the *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, "Cesar Borgia, fallen from the heights of his dream of super-human glory, was brought to Valencia, disembarking, in the custody of Prosper Colonna, at the port of Grao, whence the Borgias of Jativa had set out for the conquest of Rome."

It is not to be wondered at that the solitudes of La Motte Feuilly thenceforth grew more imperiously alluring to the heartbroken wife. The conclusion of the preliminaries to the sale of the property must be pushed forward with feverish haste. The Duchesse de Valentino no longer needed a home, but a hermitage, within whose walls she might hide her fresh grief from curious eyes.

The purchase-deed whereby Claude and François de Culant transferred to the Duchesse "the estates and jurisdictions of La Motte Feuilly, Nerez, and Fusines, with their appurtenances and appendages, for the sum of 28,000 *livres tournois*," was signed before Maîtres Claude Gomion, Mace David, and

Jean Barathon, royal notaries at Issoudun, on June 20, 1504, consent to the said sale being conveyed in a letter dated July 8, 1504, from Bertrand de Culant, (or his trustees empowered in the same document to act on his behalf), the said Bertrand being a brother of the vendors. Their mother, widow of Louis de Culant, and formerly "Damoiselle Michelle de Chauvigny," had previously, on February 8, and April 20, 1504, renounced, on behalf of herself and of her son, Gabriel, all rights whatsoever which they might otherwise have possessed in the aforesaid lands and lordships.

Nothing now seemed to threaten to intervene between the new châtelaine of La Motte Feuilly and her peaceable entrance on her acquisition. But, as though her family fate was to pursue the Sire d'Albret's daughter still, vexatious difficulties suddenly presented themselves, as witness the divers deeds and documents brought to light by the Lyncean eyes of Maître Jacques Dorsanne from their hiding-place in a certain pouch of white leather which he found, ten years later, in "the said Milady's *armoire*."

Part of the revenues of the estate were threatened with attachment. The very day after the purchase-money had been lodged with the vendors, we find the new owners "delivering and relinquishing" to the said Claude and François de Culant the sum of 250 *livres tournois* over and above the stipulated price. Next appears on the scene a sister of the vendors, Damoiselle Isabeau de Culant, wife of Pierre Danlezy, Seigneur de Boisbenard, who, apparently dissatisfied with the whole transaction, must be bought out in consideration of the sum of 2,000 *livres tournois*, which sum was duly paid over to her on July 2, 1506. It was not until Monday, February 1, 1506, that a

decree was signed by the Provost of Paris, confirming the Duchesse de Valentinois in full and final possession of the rents and profits accruing to her from her castellany, free from all obstacles and impediments whatsoever.

The estate of La Motte Feuilly was "mouvante" to that of Aigurande, belonging to Louis de Bourbon, kinsman of Charlotte d'Albret, to whom he remitted his rights as feudal over-lord to her domain; "mouvance de fief," being, according to Cotgrave, "A holding of, depending on, or doing of suit or service unto another or a higher fief." Jean d'Albret, Charlotte's uncle, followed Louis de Bourbon's example of courtesy in the matter of the similar feudal relation borne by La Motte Feuilly to his property of Châteaumeillant.

## CHAPTER XIX

A great lady in the provinces—What Charlotte d'Albret lived for—  
Finding the past at home in the Château of La Motte Feuilly—  
Tapestries of Felletin—In Miladi's chamber—Canopies for queens  
—Caskets and crespines—Gowns and gauds—The pomander—  
The shadow of Cesare Borgia on the "Inventaire."

CHARLOTTE D'ALBRET, sister and "cousin" of sovereigns, kept such state as her rank required in her "delightful castellany." The rolled-up curtain of her "Inventaire" bids us see her across the centuries a veritable "grande dame dans son château, en province." If she had ever been the simple Gascon girl whom unreflecting historians have sometimes been pleased to see in the wife of Cesare Borgia, the time for that rôle had long gone by. In the interval she had been schooled and saturated in the charmed and cultured environment of a court of which she had caught the spell. We shall find her reflecting it in the appointments of her toilette, her table, and in all her tastes. Neither "rare books" nor "valuable paintings" indeed find their way into her list of possessions; but not Anne de Bretagne herself could boast more princely parures, more exquisite stores of gold and silver plate, than the châtelaine of La Motte Feuilly.

Was all this profuse and stately splendour for herself and for her little child alone? One writer at least is in no doubt touching the matter.

"Did she cherish the hope," asks M. Edmond Planchut, "of one day welcoming the Duke, her lord, within these walls? One can scarcely question it when one reads of that rich *mobilier*."

M. Bonnaffé again expresses the same belief:

"For all the seven years of her separation from her husband, she had never once despaired of their reunion."

It was indeed for Cesare Borgia, that she might not put his greatness, poor soul, self-deceived and self-deceiving, to shame, that she lived her life of lonely splendour. For his coming, since it might be sudden, as it must be sure, she hung the walls that were to welcome him with splendid tapestries, and furnished the rooms through which they were to wander together with the chairs, the carpets, the coffers, the cabinets, which he would have chosen, nay, which were, in more than one instance, his gift and bequest to her whom he had admitted by their marriage contract to community of goods. It was to give him pride in the wife who waited to welcome him, when he came, that those splendid toilettes filled her wardrobes, and those glories of the goldsmith's and jeweller's art sparkled in her caskets. She lived indeed for others, but for him first and most of all; the proof is that, when this world no longer held him, she was in haste to depart out of it.

Let us take the faithfully recording "Inventaire" in our hand, and armed with that "indispensable manual of the seeker who desires to find the past at home," let us suffer it to reconstruct for us the environment in which we expect to find one who was entitled to it both by birth and training. Let us wander at will through the spacious rooms; the shadow has not yet fallen which was to strip them

of their splendour and hang them with the mourning which was never afterwards to be lifted from the heart and habit of their mistress. The countryside without might indeed wear its characteristic aspect of solitude and sadness, akin, as it seems to us, to the temper of Charlotte d'Albret's own, though the environs of La Motte Feuilly were by no means destitute of charm, "enriched," as they were, by "several gracious meadows, forests of lofty and luxuriant trees, and numerous ponds—representing much profitable revenue"; but within the battlemented gateway of the Château, if

"The beauty of the house is order,  
The blessing of the house contentment,  
The glory of the house hospitality,  
The crown of the house godliness,"

then to enter there was to find the ideal fulfilled.

Here is the great hall of the Château, with its buffets or dressers, displaying the princely plate, dishes, bowls, beakers, drageoirs, cups, basins, ewers, nefs, and flacons, gold vying with silver, translucent enamel with transparent crystal. The state chairs are covered with crimson velvet and cloth of gold, worked with the ducal arms, the dorsals richly trimmed with silken fringes, red and green, and gold thread, the legs of gilt latten. The forms or benches and the cushions which serve as less ceremonious seats are covered with tapestry or damask. We will pause to take special note of the tapestries which cover the walls.

Forty-seven of the eighty-two pieces named in the collection of the Duchesse de Valentinois were of Felletin manufacture, then at the height of its prosperity, and the rival of the equally famous tapestry

of Aubusson. The specimens which we find at La Motte Feuilly are typical of the manufacture in question, which was designated as *menu-vert* or *la menue-verdure*, rendered by Cotgrave as "forest or flourished work, wherein gardens, woods, or forests are represented." The tapestries of this manufacture in the d'Albret inventory were mostly in strips, with the brown border which distinguished the Felletin from the Aubusson product, the border in the latter case being blue, and were worked with foliage, birds, and beasts. Gold thread seems to have been introduced as a background in ten of the strips, which were utilised for canopies, bed valances, hangings, and bench or form cloths or cushion-covers. Besides the Felletin tapestries there is mention, according to M. Bonnaffé for the first time, of Normandy tapestry in narrow strips, in this inventory. Tapestries of the quality known as "haut lice" represented scriptural or heroic subjects—the Passion and Resurrection of our Lord, the infant Moses, and the exploits of Alexander the Great and Hercules.

On the floor of the great hall, as we wander through the Château in our air of dreams, are the rich Turkey carpets, not yet taken up, and bestowed, together with the tapestries, in that "closed and sealed-up chamber," where they were to be brought to the light of day once more only at the command and for the inspection of Maître Jacques Dorsanne.

According to M. Guiffrey, all the tapestries which had been the property of Cesare Borgia's widow eventually passed into the possession of her kinsman, Henri II. of Navarre, the son of her brother, Jean d'Albret, and of Catherine de Navarre. Here is Miladi's chamber, and here indeed we tread on

dreams ; for they tell us who come seeking to draw some hint or vision of the past from these haunted walls that no trace remains of the apartments of the Duchesse de Valentinois, the Château having been pillaged and sacked by the vandals of the Revolution. Yet here, nevertheless, is her room, not yet dismantled and darkened by the woeful trappings of widowhood and the shadow of death, but spacious and splendid, as befits the occupancy of so great a lady. The order has not yet gone forth to take down from the walls these priceless tapestries, to strip the magnificent bedstead of its superb hangings, curtains, canopies, and valances of cloth of gold, of crimson, white and blue satin, of red, white and yellow damask, of green taffetas and violet brocade, with their trimmings and ornaments of gold thread and knotted fringes.

All these sumptuous accoutrements of the state-room of the century to which Charlotte d'Albret belonged are still in their places : canopies for queens to dream under, dropping dreams of paradise, surely, from those enchanted ceilings of cunning needlework overhead ; rich sweep of falling folds of gleaming draperies bestrewn with pendant ornaments and glimmering fringes, caught back with massive bands and buckles of wrought silver. The lady of the Château still slumbers, widowed, beneath that "great counterpane of gold-brocaded damask, made of linked rosettes, and lined with crimson taffetas" ; or lies, wide-eyed and wakeful, watching the dawn steal in through narrow windows, to add a deeper note of richness to the rose and violet of her curtains. Here is her tall chair of state beside the bed, her dresser with its dainty linen cloth, the ends finely fringed ; whilst her multiplicity of coffers, coffrets,

caskets, and chests bids us lift their closed lids and look within.

The variety of receptacles which were at the disposal of the lady of the period is bewildering. Small articles were usually placed in little chests, cases, sheaths, *liettes*, boxes, or *bouquettes*. The *liettes* were small coffers full of tills or drawers; the *bouquette* being a similar coffer or trunk of wood, "wherewith," as Cotgrave quaintly puts it, "the women of old time carried their jewels, attire, and trinkets at their saddle-bow when they rid into the country." The "double debt" of toilette-table and dressing-case was paid at this era by the "coffre à bahut." "The journey accomplished," says M. Bonnaffé, "the bahut or travelling-trunk was utilised as a wardrobe or linen-chest."

In the vanished apartments of the Duchesse de Valentinoise we shall find it fulfilling yet another purpose, namely, that indicated above. In one such "coffre à bahut," divided into three compartments, we find Charlotte keeping all those dainty and delightful details of the toilette which lose none of their picturesqueness because they are not strewn in wild disorder on more modern Sheraton or Chippendale. Every article has its own sheath or case, and its own allotted compartment of the coffret: a pair of scissors; an ivory comb; a pair of green velvet slippers embroidered with scarlet, their case being of crimson satin outside and green within; two pin-cushions, one of crimson velvet and the other of the same mixed with green brocaded satin; three peignoirs of linen, one bordered with black, the others plain; linen kerchiefs, or nightcaps, forty-five of these being "very fine." Here are the Duchess's mirrors, manifold: "miroirs portatifs," easily carried in the hand,

enclosed in their scented case or sachet; "*miroirs ardents*"—metallic mirrors, made of highly polished steel or other metal, the backs and handles of wood or ivory, placed in boxes richly decorated with flowers, foliage, or allegorical figures in graceful designs.

We return to the "*couvrechef*," mention of which reminds us of the far more bewildering headgear of the waking hours of the great lady of Charlotte d'Albret's day, no less indispensable than the night-cap worn in the privacy of her sleeping apartments. And at once we are plunged into a veritable maze of doubt, confronted with words whose very meanings have long since slipped off the string which holds the changeful speech of men together. At "*crespines*" and "*coifs*" indeed we may more than boldly guess. But the "*touret*," of which both the Duchesse de Valentinoise and her mother seem to have possessed a goodly number—what does it precisely mean? What was its exact form?

"*Coiffure de femme dont la forme n'est pas bien déterminée*," says M. Bonnaffé, whom we might have counted on to solve our doubt.

"Either diadem of goldsmith's work," suggests Viollet-le-duc, "of precious stones, pearls, or stuff. A circular head-dress, sometimes accompanied by a veil, which could be lowered or raised at will. A survival of the *loup* (a small black velvet mask) worn by ladies at an earlier period."

All these definitions are of small importance to us who have reverted to strange origins in quest of twentieth-century head-coverings; the "*touret*" concerns us not save as it was worn by our Duchess derelict.

Madame d'Albret's were, as we have seen, sober enough, mostly black and violet, only one amongst

many of cloth of gold. Her daughter's are more magnificent. One jewelled border for edging the "touret" is ornamented with twenty-eight pearls and twenty-seven gold beads, valued at 600 golden crowns. Charlotte had wooden presses, one covered with leather, and having iron screws, for pressing her tourets, apparently to preserve the rigidity of the folded material, whilst an item in her inventory is "six tourets de toile à bander." She kept certain of these tourets by her, as we have noted, "for brides to wear," as wedding presents for her maids of honour. Was the touret, then, in short, if we are to trust to the portraits of the period, a head-dress in which the wimple, then passing away, and the Breton hood, the habitual head-gear of Bretagne, were cunningly and quaintly intermingled?

Besides the touret, specifically designated as such, the Duchesse de Valentinois possessed some superb articles of the coiffure. Such, for example, were the "oreillettes" of crimson satin set with eighty-eight pearls—"oreillettes," according to Cotgrave, being "the flap or piece covering the ears of a French hood"—or that "dorure d'habillement de têtes" (jewel of two pieces for a head-ornament), in which were twelve diamond roses and thirteen pearls, the form being a plume, and the value 1,500 crowns.

The gorgets worn by the Duchess were exquisite specimens of this article of sixteenth-century ladies' dress, which may be described as fichus generally embroidered with pearls and checkered with silk and gold thread. Charlotte's were mostly of open-work, one valued at eighteen and another at fourteen crowns. Her collection of trinkets was more costly and curious than her mother's. They were brought to light from velvet-lined case or ivory casket at

Maître Dorsanne's bequest : a flying griffin, set with a balas ruby ; a little golden lute, with the same ; a golden drag-net ; a golden butterfly, enamelled white ; a golden pear, enamelled red and white ; a golden scarf, set with two rubies ; and a golden artichoke, enamelled green and red—possibly, suggests M. Bonnaffé, that which was fastened to the crupper of Cesare Borgia's horse when he entered Chinon.

Cesare's shadow, we may note in passing, falls but faintly on the pages of his wife's inventory, apart from their record of his bridal gifts to Charlotte d'Albret. His, however, were the barber's or surgeon's case of instruments in its leather sheath, suspended from a chain, with figures of St. Cosmo, and St. Damian, patron saints of surgeons, and two coats of arms in the centre ; the nine shaving-basins, large and small ; and the three cotton night-caps "for men's wear," which presumably formed part of his wardrobe. Reminiscent, moreover, of the entry into Chinon are those "two German *flutes traversières*," and that "trumpet with its cord," still guarding, though with silenced tongues, the silvery echoes of that merry music with which the Borgia made known his coming on his bridal quest to France ; whilst scattered up and down the stately salons of La Motte Feuilly we catch the constantly recurring splendour of those red and yellow draperies, flung over bench or bahut, the selfsame which were once borne on the backs of the Borgia's sumpter-mules into the hill-town that soars above the Vienne.

"They have in physic," says Bacon, "use of pomanders and knots of powders for drying of

rheums, comforting of the heart, and provoking of sleep." Charlotte d'Albret shared the passion of her day for perfumes and pomanders. Did any of them, we wonder, bring comfort to her broken heart, or woo sleep, whilst she sorrowed, to her heavy eyes?

The pomander—"pomme d'ambre"—perfume box or ball, was the name indifferently applied to the inner, scented ball, compounded of various perfumes, lavender, musk, ambergris, cinnamon, cloves, rosemary, benzoin, and civet, and to the outer case, usually made of silver, opening across the centre, and perforated, to allow of the escape of the perfume within. The pomander was not primarily regarded as a jewel, but as serving the purpose of a disinfectant, much dainty ornamentation, however, being lavished on the outer case, which was frequently of twisted silver filigree. Pomegranate-shaped pomanders were chiefly of Spanish workmanship; we find them, as we should expect, in the inventory of the wife of Borgia of Jativa. Mary Tudor, daughter of Henry VIII., owned a golden pomander, inset with a dial, while her father once made her a New Year's gift of two long girdles of goldsmith's work with pendant pomanders. This was the usual mode of wearing the pomander, though occasionally it was made to stand.

Charlotte d'Albret possessed, in addition to her Spanish pomanders, one of gold, bearing her initial, another of filigree, "a string of twelve golden balls for holding perfumes, enamelled in green and red," whilst a "cage in which to put an 'oiselet de Chypre'" recalls one of the most charming conceits which grew out of the vogue of the pomander. "Oiselet de Chypre" was the pretty name given to

pomanders made of perfumed paste, moulded into various shapes, but generally that of a bird, and placed in cages, little caskets, incense-burners, and other receptacles, and suspended in living or sleeping rooms to sweeten or purify the atmosphere. The Duchesse de Valentinois had her silver perfuming-pans, her perfume-burners, her scent-sprays, her boxes and phials of assorted perfumes, notably "a great quantity of civet," this being in great demand amongst the fashionable ladies of her era.

In 1494 Francesco della Cesa, writing to Piero de' Medici from Tours, on the eve of his return from France, where he had been ambassador, states that, when he took leave of Madame de Bourbon (Anne de Beaujeu), "she called me back, and told me to write to you for a civet-cat, that is, the animal that makes civet." Ercole of Ferrara sends "cose odorifere" for his son to present to the King and Queen of France, mention being made in the accompanying letter of "three grains of musk, which are set as you will see" (probably in a pomander), "and one large, which is not otherwise set." There were also "two horns of civet." A little perfume-box of Charlotte d'Albret's held "a cake of soap scented with musk, and nothing else."

There were at this date, we are told, three fraternities of "paternostriers" (makers or sellers of beads) in Paris; the first manufacturing chaplets of horn or bone only, the second those of coral or mother-of-pearl, and the third working in jet or amber. To all three, such patronesses as the Duchesse de Valentinois must have been a source of considerable profit. For her chaplets are of every variety—chalcedony, jasper, ivory, jet, aloe wood, cedar, agate, with a pendant representing the Baptism of Christ, gold

filigree beads. Chaplets of ten beads were known as "dizaines." Charlotte d'Albret owned about a dozen, made of the substances already enumerated, one being specially designated as a dizaine for scents.

Comparison of the inventories of the Duchesse de Valentinois and Françoise d'Albret enables us to recognise some of the items in the latter as having been evidently bequeathed to her daughter. The picture of Our Lady of Pity in a mother-of-pearl shell, set in gold, in a boxwood casket, which belonged to Madame d'Albret, was probably identical with the two-sided picture which Charlotte inherited from her aunt, another Charlotte, Dame de Menétou-Salon, whence it was brought, with other property, bequeathed to her namesake's niece on her death—"namely, four women's chairs, the seat and back covered with green velvet with silk fringe to match," several beds and pillows, and coffers of which we do not know the contents.

Both Madame d'Albret and her daughter owned more than one of those precious objects known as *Agnus Dei*. These were little rounds of wax, stamped with the image of the Paschal Lamb, and made, in Rome, from the Paschal Candle which was solemnly blessed every year on Holy Saturday by the Sovereign Pontiff. Are we gazing on a souvenir of the Borgia Pontificate when we lift the lid of the "two coffrets in which were *Agnus Dei*"—the property of the daughter-in-law of Alexander VI. ? These *Agnus Dei* were held in great veneration, and as they were frequently carried on the person, into church, and elsewhere, they were generally enclosed, for their better protection, in little caskets, monstrances, or medallions, of gold or silver, richly wrought, such as we note in both the d'Albret in-



**DOOR OF THE CHAPEL OF THE ANNONCIADES, BOURGES.**



ventories. The elder woman owned one "in enamel on silver, on which were seventeen ermine tails." This proud cognisance of Brittany was no doubt inspired by François d'Albret's supposed claims upon the duchy. There is mention of another "small, in silver-gilt," whilst a third is in the shape of a small reliquary ornamented with gold.

Still continuing our comparison, we find the same scarcity of books and pictures, save those of a religious character, in the twin inventories. Madame d'Albret leaves to her heirs "a book with the form for Confession," "a small missal with one clasp, silver-gilt," "several silver pictures of no value to put in prayer-books," "a silver-gilt frame in which were pictures of St. Christopher, St. George, and others." Her daughter's possessions in this direction make no finer show. "An Annunciation in wood, gilt inside," "a little picture of the Nativity, valued at four crowns," and a few little books. That is all.

Charlotte d'Albret left a house at Nerez to Petit Jean the furrier and his wife; but he lost a good customer in the "said Miladi" of La Motte Feuilly. For it was Petit Jean, doubtless, who supplied the Duchesse de Valentinois with most of the costly furs which figure in the wardrobe, sable and ermine being, apparently, her favourites. The former was bought by the *timbre*, a certain number of skins, tied and sold together, being thus designated. Four *timbres* and four separate skins were found after Charlotte's death in one chest, another containing whole sets, panels, cuffs, and complete trimmings for a dress. Other items recorded are "a small piece of ermine, with a quantity for edgings," in

“ a little parcel.” Her three black-cloth mourning gowns were trimmed with sable, black lamb, and black jennet.

Judging by the Duchess's collection of dress lengths not made up, she must have been a generous patron and customer of the clothmakers and mercers of Issoudun and Bourges. These lengths include crimson velvet, brocaded violet damask, green damask, white taffetas, crimson taffetas, cloth of gold, yellow taffetas, white satin brocaded with silver thread, tawny-coloured taffetas, and green velvet, besides the piece of white satin which she bestowed by her will on the Cordeliers of Issoudun.

## CHAPTER XX

The ducal household—How Charlotte d'Albret cared for those who served her—The "Loaf-giver"—Needlework and fine linen—Pantry and plate and priest's vestments.

SIMON DE LA ROMAGIÈRE, keeping the Sire d'Albret *au courant* of scandal and other matters in his letters from Paris, gives us a glimpse of his crony's daughter, "that unhappy widow, in sorrowful retreat at La Motte Feuilly." He even presumes to suggest that the Sire d'Albret might very well offer her the consolation of at least a few written words; but from internal evidence it would appear that the hint was not taken, the correspondence between Nérac and La Motte Feuilly being of a purely business nature. Charlotte, it may be, had no time to miss the letters she never expected. It was no listless life of leisure that was led by the lady of the Château while she waited for the day, that was never to dawn, of reunion with her unworthy lord.

She would have been a châtelaine after the heart of Herbert of Bemerton, who sang:

"Be useful where thou livest, that they may  
Both want and wish thy pleasing presence still."

The poet would surely have shed upon this noble dame of bygone France the gentle benediction of the scholar and the saint, so perfectly must he have

beheld in her the fulfilment of his exhortation. If, as he wrote,

"Kindness, good parts, and great places, are the way  
To compass this,"

then, most assuredly, Charlotte d'Albret found that way. If to

"Find out men's wants and will, and meet them there,"

is to be the ideal neighbour, then how many must have blessed the neighbourhood of La Motte Feuilly for the sake of her who bore such gentle sway within !

The household of the Duchesse de Valentinois was on a princely footing. She was served as esquires by gentlemen of high estate—by Claude de la Perrière, Seigneur de Billy ; by Jean de Moussy, Seigneur de la Motte Fleury, seven miles away, who was her maître d'hôtel, and also held of her the office of captaincy of Issoudun ; by Raymond de Grossolles, of an ancient House of Guienne and Armagnac, and Seigneur d'Asques ; by Jean de Mareuil, Seigneur de Montaboulin, a lordship near Châteauroux, which he held in right of his wife, Françoise de Rivaudes ; by Pierre de Regnard, Seigneur de Maray ; and by François Amignon, Seigneur de Cloys—all of whom were afterwards to figure as executors of her last will and testament.

Her almoner was Messire Robert Challopin ; Messire André du Vergier, her receiver or collector of the taxes due to her. Nicholas de Mercier was her valet de chambre, charged with the supervision of the care of the furniture and tapestry of the establishment, and having under his orders Baudet des Bources, the "tapissier" or upholsterer, whose work it was to see to the necessary repairs or replen-

ishing of the hangings, carpets, etc. The valuable gold plate and silver ware were in the care of Etienne Gueriton, "clerk of the plate"; Robert de Pierre-court presided over the butler's pantry, and Regnaud le Saige over the wine-cellars. There were also a steward of the household, whose name does not appear in the inventory to which we owe these details, two cooks, a baker, and other subordinates.

In the lower room of the donjon keep dwelt Yvonnet Louargan, the tailor, whose business it was to fashion, under the direction of Catherine Chalopin, the Duchess's waiting-woman, and probably, adds M. Bonnaffé, under that of Charlotte herself, some of those exquisite toilettes in which we know she delighted to appear prior to her life-long assumption of widow's mourning. All Yvonnet's worldly possessions were found by Maître Dorsanne, in the course of his visit to La Motte Feuilly, in a leather-covered chest in the room which served the tailor for sleeping apartment, and contained a bed, a dresser, a table, and a few other trifling pieces of furniture.

The ladies and serving-women of the Duchesse de Valentinois were Catherine de Regnard, widow of the Seigneur de Toutvent, and daughter of Antoine de Regnard, Seigneur de Maray, and of Jeanne de la Touche, her brother Pierre being one of Charlotte d'Albret's gentlemen-in-waiting; Marie de Lavoyne; Marie de la Perrière; and Magdeleine de Mazellon. The latter, who was specially designated by her mistress to continue, after her death, in the service of the little Louise de Valentinois, was the daughter of Guillaume de Mazellon, Seigneur d'Alleret, and of Marie de Regnard, and niece of Catherine de Regnard. There was besides, Catherine Dalluies, attached,

during Charlotte's lifetime, to the service of Mademoiselle Louise.

To all this numerous household, dwelling beneath her roof, Charlotte d'Albret looked with as much maternal thought as prudent surveillance. She was ever minutely mindful of the wants and comfort of those who served her. She saw, for instance, to the provision of a sitting-room or refectory for the use of her gentlemen-in-waiting, the furnishing of this apartment being most minutely described in the inventory. The walls were hung with Felletin tapestry, of typical design, worked with "animals, birds, and verdure." To rest on, when they wished to do so, there were two bedsteads or couches, covered with cloth or serge. There was a table on trestles, and benches, while ranged around the room were four great chests, covered with leather, and two cassoni "of white plaster, made in Italy," all used as seats. Near the tall chimneypiece, with its andirons, stood a leather-covered armchair. "A billiard-table, covered with green cloth," was at the disposal of the occupants of the room when in the mood for play.

Their mistress is as generously and gladly concerned with the fates and fortunes of her ladies as though no "shade"—certainly not the baleful shadow of Cesare Borgia—had ever "crossed" her own life. Like the Laureate, that which had turned to dust and ashes for herself had only made her kindlier with her kind. With sweet and womanly solicitude, she takes thought for her women's welfare, manifests an intimate interest in their love-affairs, bestows dowries upon them and on each successive bride, as she passes from the quiet circle at La Motte Feuilly to the destined home and husband of her

heart, the traditional girdle, almsbag, gorget, and crespine (caul-net) of gold thread, "for brides to wear." Maître Dorsanne found some of these bridal ornaments, still unclaimed, in the little leather-covered box where Charlotte kept them until they should be wanted.

Or, if her ladies were called (it might be, more happily) to celestial, rather than to earthly espousals, they might none the less count upon their lady's heart still beating in sisterly sympathy with their own high yet humble hopes. Thus we see her standing sponsor at the altar of the Annonciades at Bourges at the clothing and profession of her kinswoman, Anne d'Orval, who had previously been her maid of honour. Who shall say that her reception into the Order did not receive an added benediction, even in that holy place, from the presence and witness of Charlotte d'Albret?

But the Duchess's sympathies stray still farther afield. She is the true lady—the "Loaf-giver." The vagrant and the pilgrim, "the beggar at her gates," and the "poor upon her lands," are as much her care as the young brides for whom she laid up diadems and marriage dowries. Travellers going on foot to Châteaumeillant and other places in the neighbourhood had but to halt, footsore and weary, at the threshold of La Motte Feuilly, to find practical hospitality and good cheer awaiting them, to speed them, rejoicing, on their way; while in the great hall of the Château stood the wooden chest in which, according to mediaeval custom, it was obligatory on prince, lord, or bourgeois, to place the "alms-bread," being that portion of every meal reserved for the poor. To the hour of her death, none, in short, who ever served her, or who had any claim upon

her goodness of heart, were ever forgotten by Charlotte d'Albret.

Like her mother, Charlotte was a skilful needle-woman. Here is her "round basket," containing several embroidery patterns, besides some old bits of linen garments for women's wear, probably kept by her for patching; in a flat coffer, covered with leather and clasped with latten, are several hanks of linen thread. Under her deft fingers grew those quaint "beasts and birds," with coats of arms for company, on her damask cushions. She worked that "counterpane of wool of different colours," sewed on those tassels of silk and those glistening fringes of gold thread. Those "two little bits of cloth of gold," that "little piece of green satin," are snippets from some work of her hands—they and it alike now long crumbled into dust.

From her mother also, Charlotte inherited her love of fair and fine linen. She must have given much time and thought—good housewife as she was—to the delightful task of sorting and replenishing her stock of house-linen, slipping fresh supplies of scented sachets between the snowy piles of sheets and the dainty napery in her linen-closet. Besides the "twenty-four plain sheets, for the use of the household," there were forty more, of fine linen, dozens of pillowcases, large and small, summer counterpanes of linen, others of white damask, lined with red taffetas, and rugs, used as bedspreads of white and blue. There were "six table-cloths and three and a half dozen of table-napkins, also six table-cloths more," for the pantry.

The vogue of open-worked Venetian embroidery was in its infancy at the beginning of the sixteenth century, but the Duchesse de Valentinois possessed

some very fine specimens. The greatest artists of the Republic were proud to furnish designs for the native "tabliers or taviolles de Venise." One of these artists, Federigo of Vinciolo, was invited to the court of Catherine de Medici at a later date, his patterns being much sought after by embroiderers. At a sale in 1572, eight to twelve *livres tournois* were paid for one of these Venetian tabliers ("tablier, nappe de table," says Laborde, in his "Glossary"), an embroidered pair fetching as much as 106 *livres tournois*. A square leather-covered chest amongst the effects of the Duchesse de Valentinois, in a room, over the kitchen at La Motte Feuilly, contained twenty-seven fine serviettes of open-work Venetian embroidery, whilst in another chest were eight tablecloths of similar design, all quite new, whilst in a third coffer were seven small tabliers (d'oyleys ?) of the same work.

Passing from the upper to the lower department of the household at La Motte Feuilly, we follow in the wake of Maître Dorsanne, who, on a day, descended into the kitchen of the Château, awaited by the cooks, Malo Henry and Guillaume de Villers, who had been warned to hold themselves in readiness to receive, and to undergo the ordeal of investigation at the hands of, the important official. In these regions we find ourselves in a mad maze and medley of obsolete words, many of which, nevertheless, with the aid of Cotgrave and Richelet, presently fit themselves with familiar, modern meanings—"Four Dutch ovens, seven spits, two andirons, three frying-pans without handles, four with handles, one basin, two copper cauldrons, a mortar and pestle to pound spices, a shovel, eight pewter platters, a dish, two

iron spoons, a large strainer, and a slice," besides kettles, chafing-dishes, and a variety of other utensils.

The baker was Simon Huguet. In his bakehouse were a brass pan on a tripod, and a bread-board, while in the room behind the bakehouse, evidently occupied by Huguet himself as his sleeping apartment, were a bedstead with feather bed and pillows, also a folding or chair bedstead.

The outdoor and subordinate members of the household were François du Fresne, the concierge; Jean Cuhault, the shepherd; and Antoine Nicole, the muleteer.

Robert de Pierrecourt, the butler, was responsible for certain plate, about 130 pieces in all, designated in the inventory as that kept for every-day use, the clerk of the gold and silver ware having charge of that reserved for state occasions. The "*orfèvrerie de tous les jours*" included an egg-stand, to hold three eggs, richly chased, and bearing the ducal arms, two dozen spoons with square handles, several salt-cellars, some round, others square, some with covers, six round plates, with the arms of the Duchess, six trenchers, plain and square, and two finger-basins, one with a lip. In the butler's pantry, also, stood two chests, one utilised as a bread-pan, and the other to hold the table-linen. The contents of the latter at the time of the Duchess's death were twelve table-cloths, six fine and six of coarser quality, and three and a half dozen finger-napkins.

Regnault le Saige was the cellarer. Five casks of wine, two tapped, and the others not yet begun upon, were in the cellar of La Motte Feuilly when Maître Dorsanne descended there to take the inventory; also a dresser and a copper tub for washing up plates

and dishes, a weighing-machine with weights for weighing tallow, seven copper candlesticks, together with numerous vessels of varied shapes for drawing or holding wine or water, jugs, tankards, flagons, pots, and ewers, mostly of pewter, but others of superior material and design, elaborately decorated with serpents, and bearing the ducal arms—the workmanship Italian, and therefore Cesare Borgia's contribution to the furnishing of his wife's domestic offices. There were wine-coolers in the living-rooms placed, as was customary, in front or beneath the buffets.

We turn from the Château to the chapel, its ornaments including a Pax, with a figure of Our Lady in the centre, gilt on the outside; a crucifix supported on a double lantern tower with six turrets, the whole richly chased, and decorated with foliage in repoussé work; two tall altar candlesticks, two smaller ones; two cruces for the priests, gilt, with serpent heads for the lid; a great chalice and paten, both ornamented with godroons, and embossed with a representation of the Passion; a *custode* (cloth or covering for the pyx); a bénitier, with holy-water sprinkler; a censer, with the little incense-box and spoon, a box for the consecrated wafers (which only a deacon or sub-deacon was allowed to prepare); a dish for the priest at the Lavabo; two silver-gilt book-clasps; and a sanctus bell, partly silver, with three little children's figures in repoussé work.

No less sumptuous were the vestments and fair linen: chasubles of cloth of gold, figured with green, of gold and crimson damask; dalmatics, stoles, and maniples of crimson velvet, white damask with white and gold fringes; thirteen altar-cloths "for saying and celebrating mass"; three albs of fine linen, two

others of ordinary linen ; two surplices of the same ; three amices and one worn alb, " to make handkerchiefs for the priests " ; six altar napkins ; and four fair linen cloths. Two pieces of cloth of gold served " to ornament the places where the Epistle and Gospel were read." They were lined with white silk and edged with a border of the same embroidered with gold thread. The altar hangings were of cloth of gold, violet damask, and crimson.

## CHAPTER XXI

The Duchesse de Valentinois as a woman of business—Loans and letters—The unwritten page.

THE young wife in whose intelligence and common sense Cesare Borgia had condescended to place every confidence, had blossomed, in the years that had passed since he had entrusted her with the conduct of his affairs in France, into the clever and capable woman of business, as the contents of chest, coffret, and liette at La Motte Feuilly testify. All are in order; bills, receipts, indentures, notes of hand, title-deeds, neatly docketed, in their separate bundle, drawer, or leather pouch. Here are the most important—the title-deeds of La Motte Feuilly, Nerez, and Fusines; the royal letters-patent regarding her dowry; the power of attorney investing her with sole authority in her husband's duchy and county of Valentinois and Diois; her marriage contract; a deed dated October 11, 1508, whereby the Sieur d'Albret promises to pay to his daughter annually for three years the sum of 900 *livres tournois*; another, wherein the Duc de Valentinois settles upon his wife all his goods and chattels whatsoever of which he shall be possessed at the time of his death.

The memoranda reveal to us, amongst other items, the extraordinary transaction whereby Louis de Sacerges, Seigneur de Bors, sells to the said Miladi his serving-men, Nicolas des Arbres and Jean Jamet,

for sixty *livres*, paying them each thirty *sous* per annum. Michau Sechard, of the parish of La Motte, parts with a "piece of land containing six bushels (? of wheat) for fifty *sous tournois*."

Noel Cochion "takes and brings" to the Château certain "*bêtes aulmailles*," and receives for the same the sum of forty *livres tournois*. Chaumeau, the ancient chronicler of Berry, describes the country in the immediate neighbourhood of La Motte Feuilly as flat, most of it poor and waste, producing, however, wheat mixed with rye, more frequently the latter, the soil being as a rule more adapted for grazing—"plus propre aux pâturage de l'aulmaille et gros bétail"; large numbers of which were reared on the meadows around La Châtre. The old French word "*aulmaille*," is applied, says Richelet to "sheep and horned animals."

We have now to turn to the numerous evidences given by the "Inventaire" of monetary transactions which go to prove that Charlotte d'Albret's purse was no less open than her heart to any and every appeal, whether that appeal reached her from a comparative stranger, a subordinate, or from her equals and her kindred. The list of her debtors, mercilessly dragged forth to the scrutiny of Maître Dorsanne, is a lengthy one. Not even the "noble lord, Messire Louis de Bourbon, Prince de la Roche-sur-Yon," can hope, under cover of his relationship to the dead Duchess, to escape identification and confrontation with her claim. For Maître Dorsanne facts are facts; his duty is to set them down. And the particular fact made clear by that "note of hand dated the thirteenth day of December, 1507," found in one of the presses at La Motte Feuilly, is, that on the

date aforesaid Monseigneur Louis de Bourbon borrowed from his kinswoman, the Duchesse de Valentinois, the sum of 1,100 golden crowns, He could do no less, three years later, than formally renounce all feudal claims upon her property of La Motte Feuilly.

Charlotte's uncle, Jean d'Albret, Comte de Dreux and de Rethel, Seigneur d'Orval, Saint-Amand, Châteaumeillant, La Chapelle, and Governor of Champagne and Brie, the King's chamberlain, captain of a hundred men-at-arms, is debtor for 500 crowns. His sister, Françoise, third wife of Jean de Bourgogne, Duchesse de Brabant, de Lothier, and de Limbourg, Comtesse de Nevers, de Rethel, and d'Eu, Lady of Antwerp, pledges with her niece certain rings and other jewels for the loan of 4,315 *livres tournois*.

But the Duchesse de Valentinois is no less accessible when there is question of a comparative stranger in pecuniary difficulties. Here is no less a personage than Jacques de Beaune, Seigneur de Semblançay, Vicomte de Tours, and some time mayor of the same city, King's councillor and chamberlain, superintendent of finances, bailiff and governor of Touraine, applying for a loan of 6,600 *livres tournois* to the wife of Cesare Borgia. The Sire d'Albret might forget—but his daughter's memory was longer—that Jacques de Beaune had been her father's friend.

There are less notable borrowers besides : Robert de Masle, Antoine de la Motte, and Jean Souillet, merchants of Tours ; Geoffroy Jacquet, goldsmith, of Blois—called by Maître Dorsanne to attend the taking of the inventory at La Motte Feuilly as sworn valuer of the effects of the late Duchess—Nicholas le Mercier, her own valet de chambre ; a certain “ noble gentleman,” Guyot de Montieux, Seigneur

du Grand Thary, near La Motte Feuilly ; last of all, Claude de Culant, vendor of La Motte Feuilly itself, acknowledges that he is indebted to the late Duchess for the sum of 192 *livres*, which she had advanced "to pay his debts."

What other kindly deeds, unrewarded, save in the doing of them ; what harassing burdens lifted ; what ease of mind bestowed upon some anxious tradesman, some struggling father of a numerous family, some member of a poor but proudly ancient House, fallen upon evil days, some humble, hardworking neighbour beset by carking care and cruel creditors ; of gracious deeds like these, of which there must have been many in the life of Charlotte d'Albret, we have no hint, save such as may be conveyed, for instance, between the lines of brief passing allusions to certain transactions between "the late Miladi" and other persons unknown, though the names of Jean and Etienne Mathnet, Mathurin and Etienne Ageorges, Etienne de la Vau, Etienne Mygonnet, and Jean Morier appear in connection therewith.

For one packet, and for one alone, we seek in vain amongst the contents of *liette* and *coffret* which Maître Dorsanne displays so conscientiously, perhaps also, as is inevitable, a little callously, before our eyes. There are no letters from Cesare Borgia to his wife. Were there ever any written ? And if so, what was their fate ? What archives, as yet unstormed by the restless and rapacious hosts of the modern research-worker, hold that supreme and final key to the mystery of the Duc de Valentinois' forsaking of his young and beautiful wife ? Letters there must have been from her to him—if one may guess at their wording, they must have called forth



**SIDE VIEW OF THE CHANCEL OF THE CHAPEL OF THE ANNONCIADES, BOURGES.**



some reply, though of the curtest, even from a heart of stone. Had he loved the writer, how such letters must have illumined his sick-room at Nepi, his dungeon at Chinchilla, his strong tower at La Mota, with the deathless fire and fragrance of a pure woman's faithful love—unsullied by the thing on which she lavished it, even as it remained unshaken to the end by the cold cruelty that spurned it !

If she wrote, did the letters ever reach his hand ? If so, did he toss them contemptuously aside, unread, or barely glanced at ? Cesare the soldier was no scribe ; crafty correspondence with senators and magistrates—of Perugia and Florence, and elsewhere—“Magnificent and potent Lords,” and his “special friends and brothers,” notwithstanding ; despite, also, his account of the massacre of Sinigaglia, as penned to Isabella d'Este.

The letters that never came—were these the slow, subtle strokes that stilled that yearning heart at last ? Or, did they come ? Were they worn, before her death, to undecipherable fragments, so closely were they folded to that heart, so frequently were they stained and steeped by her softly falling tears ? Was there no casket among her possessions worthy of such treasures ? Had she time, before the hand of death closed upon her own, to destroy those precious papers, so that none, not even their child, might look upon them ? It may well be so. They were all—save little Louise—of the living man that was her own. If ever he broke the seven years' silence to which he condemned her, what right is it of ours, or of any other human soul, to profane the secrets of that breaking ?

## CHAPTER XXII

Charlotte d'Albret's St. Elizabeth—Their common destiny—The court of a Saint—Her holy dream—Its fulfilment—The passing of the "Good Duchess" of Berry—The fate of her tomb.

EVERY woman, in the hour of her annunciation, whether it be of joy or sorrow, desires to "depart in haste" from the company of her own tremulous thoughts, in order that she may share them, in some beckoning hill-country high above the visions of the vulgar, with some St. Elizabeth of her soul-kindred. In the life of Charlotte d'Albret that rôle was to be filled by a saint indeed—Jeanne de Valois. These two women stand for ever on the page of French history which bears their tragic story, bound together by a chain no passage of the years can snap asunder. Victims and instruments in a bargain on which the centuries still cry shame, the pure heart of the girl, unawakened, was of as little value in the sight of those who sold them into captivity, as the torn and tortured heart of the woman whose griefs had kept her virginal.

The traffickers in human hearts who disposed of their fates were incapable of estimating the worth of either. For Anne de Bretagne they recovered a crown; for France, they won back a rich fief. For themselves, they took up a cross which youth and beauty and virtue, on the one side, and saintliness in ill-favoured guise, on the other, could not avail

to turn aside. They were one in their destiny—although Roman bonfires blazed to light the way of the one to her ill-omened bridal; for St. Jeanne de Valois the howling of the storm at Amboise, the hissing of the rain, the crash of the thunder, fitly symbolised the tempest that laid waste, but could not eternally blast or blight, the sweet exotics of a region as far removed from human spoiling as light from darkness.

As with so much that concerns Charlotte d'Albret, it is, unfortunately, impossible to assign a date to the beginning of the friendship between her and the repudiated wife of Louis XII.—a friendship which is not the least moving and memorable amongst the meagre details available of a life of which we are permitted to know so little.

Certain it is that, in spite of the difference of twenty years or more between these two victims of Borgio-Valois policy, and of the gulf between Jeanne, in her shrinking seclusion, a wife yet no wife, at Mont-richard and Montils-sur-Blois, and Charlotte in the gaiety and grandeur of the French court—if indeed, it was there, and not with Jeanne herself, that she passed her early girlhood—in spite of all that might have put them asunder, it is not to be supposed that they met altogether as strangers when the neighbourhood of Bourges to Issoudun brought them together in the capital of the Duchesse de Berry.

The little crooked body and plain face of the uncrowned Queen of France may not have inspired the child Charlotte with that repugnance which was all that Jeanne ever won from the man to whom she had been bound, almost in her cradle, by the iron will of the cruel, cunning Louis XI. But the girl Charlotte, hearing, while her needle flew in and out of

her strip of embroidery, the gossip of the court touching that solitary, stateless figure, already entered, through the gate of suffering, on her novitiate of saintship, may have flashed, across the distance, to that daughter, sister, and wife of kings<sup>1</sup> who was yet more lonely than the veriest outcast, more than one swift, silent arrow of tender sympathy with her sorrows. Life was still a joyous beckoning to a hundred hopes yet to be fulfilled, for Charlotte d'Albret in those days. She little dreamed how the bread of her unspoken compassion, "cast upon wet faces," was to return to her, in overflowing measure, "after many days."

There was in the friendship of these two forsaken ones more than mere community of dereliction. There was also, on one side at least, an eager, passionate desire to offer, if it might be, something like restitution and recompense to that other Duchess derelict whose cup of insult and ignominy she had helped, though innocently and unwittingly, to fill to the brim. Growing daily wiser through her own experience, it seemed to that sensitive nature of Charlotte's that she owed to Jeanne expiation and atonement even more than friendship. She had taken indeed no conscious part in the cruel conspiracy which had stripped Jeanne of her rights as wife and Queen ; none the less, she was impelled by a passion for atonement. Her reward was to be a friendship that was to last till death and beyond it. She forsook the court of Anne de Bretagne for another, more austere, but none the less "a school of virtue"; though now the lessons were to be of

<sup>1</sup> "I was," she said of herself, "daughter, sister, and wife of kings; and had I not been driven from the nuptial couch, a King of France might have called me mother."

things eternal rather than of the things that are but temporal.

Charlotte, we are told, "avait pris la douce habitude d'aller souvent d'Issoudun à Bourges, voir et visiter la reine Jeanne pour apprendre et recevoir quelque bonne instruction et consolation spirituelle de cette sainte princesse." "She sought," says another of her biographers, "to gather from the Saint the secrets of that Divine Love in which alone Christian souls can hope to purify themselves from the contact with evil which they have been compelled to undergo." Charlotte had many fellow learners in her new school.

Jeanne de Valois had been denied an earthly sacring only that she might be recompensed with the love of the poor, the desolate, and the sorrowful. Thus, we find around her, in the capital of her duchy, a circle of noble ladies, widows, and others, who were attracted to the presence of that homely, holy Princess, as by a magnet. There was no grief, no infamy, no misery, that did not find shelter, and, if it might be, relief, in the heart of that crowned nun. Simply clad in rough serge, she entered the most wretched hovel like an angel of hope and deliverance. It is no miracle that her old dispenser, Etienne Mathe, relates when he tells us that the poor ulcerated sufferers for whom he prepared, under her direction, his healing balms and unguents desired always that they might pass through the hands of the "Good Duchess" before they reached those wounded, tortured bodies, in order that thus their good effect might be secured. "Out of the hands of pain and suffering, more gifts have come to men than from any other source."

It was so with Jeanne de France. It was no mere

legend, we doubt not, that balm like healing flowed out of those royal hands. For the heart that has been most cruelly scourged and trampled underfoot by the hosts of wrong and pain and disaster, has earned this crown : it becomes, henceforth, though careless eyes may only see the scars, " a green place, with its orchard trees," an Avalon where other broken hearts may, in turn, find healing of their "grievous wounds." Many such royal, noble, grief-stricken ladies, matrons, widows, queens, young girls, formed the court of Jeanne de France at Bourges.

These pious ladies were associated with the Duchesse de Berry in her good works and devotional exercises—above all, with that crowning work of her shattered life, the foundation of the Convent of the Annunciation at Bourges, founded in memory of the "Ten Joys and Virtues of Our Lady." In this precious intimacy, Charlotte d'Albret took an active part; the bond between the saintly Duchess and herself being further strengthened by her choice, as director, of the Franciscan Père Gilbert Nicolas, who was the confessor of Jeanne de Valois. Such an intimacy could not but be "rendered daily more precious" by the younger woman's "griefs and isolation." Jeanne indeed did not live long enough to be with Charlotte d'Albret in the last sorrow which she was called upon to endure, the loss of the husband to whose return to her she had never ceased to look forward with most pathetic confidence; but it was in the strength of the lessons she had learned at her side, we may be sure, that she met her crowning trial.

In the ancient palace of the Dukes of Berry, now become her own ducal residence, Jeanne de France

kept her little court in the utmost simplicity and the most serene atmosphere of saintliness. Those who formed it, says M. Maulde de la Clavière, in his biography of the saintly Queen, were attracted thither neither by the quest for honours nor by the hope of reward; affection and devotion alone had guided their footsteps to Bourges.

Amongst the ladies of noble birth and character who thus attached themselves to her service were *Françoise de Maille*, heiress of the House of *Chauvigny*, with which the *Duchesse de Valentinois* herself claimed kinship, and wife of the *Sire d'Aumont* since 1480; *Jeanne Malet de Gravelle*, the daughter of one of the most faithful and distinguished of the courtiers of *Charles VIII.*, and wife of *Charles d'Amboise*, nephew of *Louis XII.*'s great minister, and builder of *Châteaumeillant*; while *Jeanne de Bourbon*, daughter of *Guy de Bourbon*, Governor of *Berry* in 1484 is said to have died of grief at the death of her beloved mistress, for whose service she relinquished all the brilliant prospects which the court of *Anne de Bretagne* might have offered to her girlish ambitions, and was buried, by *Anne's* commands, in the *Sainte Chapelle* at Bourges.

Still more tragic and touching figures were passing visitors at the court of the *Duchesse de Berry*. In the summer of 1502 there came one such guest to Bourges, where she was received, as befitted her rank, under a canopy bearing her arms. *Beatrice of Aragon*, the repudiated wife of *Ladislaus*, King of *Hungary*, daughter of *Ferdinand I.* of *Sicily*, and formerly the consort of the celebrated *Matthias Corvinus*, was not, says *Raynal*, the historian of *Berry*, the pure and spotless *Jeanne de France*; but their destinies were too much akin for the repudiated

wife of Louis XII. to withhold from a sister-princess who had been called to endure identical insult and ignominy from a husband's hands the sympathy which she could so well bestow upon a fellow sufferer.

It was doubtless on her way to visit the Duchesse de Berry at Bourges, that Beatrice passed through Romorantin, where we know that the townspeople, in accordance with directions received from Louis himself, went to some expense to welcome their illustrious visitor. The archives of Romorantin record "the expenses on the occasion of the entrance of the Queen of Hungary" in 1502. These expenses include payment of six deniers to a man who "gathered rushes and *pavois*<sup>1</sup> to strew before the said Queen at her coming through the streets; six *livres* for blue stuff to make a canopy to be held over her head, five sous being bestowed on the town crier who was commanded to muster the inhabitants to go before the Queen."

In the Great Tower of Bourges, consecrated for her by the captivity of her faithless husband, Jeanne was doubtless permitted to bring the uplifting consolation of her presence and to comfort with spiritual converse her distant kinsman, Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, who was consigned by Louis XII. to the same dungeon in which the latter had once languished as Duc d'Orléans.

But above all who had need of her, Jeanne de Valois loved Charlotte d'Albret. Their intimacy was not founded on mere externals; in the most inner sense they walked in the House of God as

<sup>1</sup> André Thérêt, in his sketch of the work of Henri Latouche, the landscape word-painter of Berry, quotes an impressionist picture from his pen, in which he alludes to "the king-fishers poised on the reeds which the natives of Berry call '*pavois*.'"

friends. The delight of both was as Hilarion de Coste writes of the Duchesse de Valentinois, "to be and converse with those of solid virtue and true piety." As though to draw the bond between them still closer, Charlotte chose for her confessor Father Gilbert Nicolas, afterwards known as Father Gabriel Maria, the director of Jeanne de Valois, Madame la Lorraine, the Duchesse d'Alençon, and other noble and royal ladies of blessed memory. This saintly ecclesiastic, "well versed in the science of souls," afterwards became the first chaplain of the Order of the Annonciades, though he had at first opposed the foundation of the Order.

The Order of the Annonciades, with which the name of this Saint of France is associated, was instituted by her on October 8, 1502, when the first five Sisters were received. The foundress herself took the veil June 4, 1503. The Order continued to flourish for many years after the death of St. Jeanne, chiefly in France and Belgium. In the former country the primitive rule is still retained by the convents at Villeneuve and Bordeaux.

It was to this "soul-friend" that St Jeanne de Valois wrote in her last will and testament: "I pray you never to meddle with any marriage, however worthy the person concerned, for things often turn out otherwise than one expects." She was thinking, we cannot doubt, when she penned those words, of her own experience, and, perhaps, of Charlotte d'Albret's also.

On February 4, 1505, the tolling of the Cathedral bell of Bourges announced to the townspeople of her capital that their "Good Duchess" was no more. To one of that noble group of ladies who were her friends, and who were presently to follow her mortal

and revered remains to their last resting-place, that mournful knell must have spoken of irreparable loss. No more was the Duchesse de Valentinois to traverse the familiar road to Bourges, sure of finding at the journey's end "comfort and strength." Never again was Jeanne de Valois in turn to journey to Issoudun, "to bear to her beloved friend the example of her own courage and resignation." They were to meet no more, save in the silence and the solitude of the grave.

Charlotte d'Albret bore her part in the last sad rites in the Sainte Chapelle, when the crowned nun, laying aside in death the grey habit, scarlet scapular, and white mantle of her Order, lay vested in effigy as a Queen, robed in cloth of gold, to receive sovereign honours for the second time in her chequered life. What sorrows, not to be counted by the passage of years, had been her portion since she had entered Orléans seven years before, carried in a litter, wearing a tunic of cloth of gold, her litter hung with the same fabric, her husband's chamberlain walking before her, four barons supporting the corners of the trappings of her horses, and her canopy held by our citizens of Orléans! Poor broken heart and misshapen body! Hers, surely, by right, should be the epitaph of the "Golden Legend":

"O pure in heart! from thy sweet dust shall grow  
Lilies, upon whose petals will be written  
'Ave Maria' in characters of gold!"

The mortal remains of the "Good Duchess" lay undisturbed in their sepulchre until 1562, when they were sacrilegiously dragged to the light of day, burnt in the public square, and the ashes scattered to the winds.

To-day, the Convent of the Annonciades is a barracks; the Chapel serving as a store-room for the clothing of an infantry regiment. But the sweet memory of St. Jeanne de Valois is still enshrined in those desecrated walls. Over the ogival doorway of the Chapel may still be seen the initial letters of the Ten Virtues, symmetrically carved around an empty niche which formerly contained a statue of the Virgin. The letters are disposed in the following order :

P. P.	H. V.
L. O.	P. P.
P.	L.

signifying Purity, Prudence, Humility, Truth, Praise, Obedience, Poverty, Patience, Pity, the tenth virtue typified by the spear which pierced the heart of Jesus and of Mary.<sup>1</sup>

The entire rule, instructions, and preaching of the Order were intended to be a pious commentary, a holy imitation of the life of Mary considered under these ten aspects.

<sup>1</sup> Purété, Prudence, Humilité, Vérité, Louange, Obéissance, Pauvreté, Patience, Pitié, lance qui perça le cœur de Jésus et de Marie—(*lancea*), c'est-à-dire l'affliction.

## CHAPTER XXIII

The refugee of Pampeluna—His "very dear wife's dowry"—A last hope—The mission of Requesenz—Wife and friend plead in vain—Louis XII. takes vengeance for the Borgia's "nasty tricks"—The ambush of Viana—A scarlet sunset.

ESCAPED, as by a miracle, from his prison of La Mota, and received with open arms by his kinsfolk at the court of Navarre, the once powerful Duc de Valentinois found himself, nevertheless, a poor man, amongst those who, indeed, were well disposed towards him, but who could be of little pecuniary, therefore all-important, assistance to him. The position was as galling as it was insupportable to a man of unquenchable ambitions, cut off from all hope of once more brandishing his queenly sword in the face of a vindictive and defiant fate. Money was necessary first of all.

The 200,000 florins which he had deposited with the bankers of Genoa at the moment of the election of Cardinal della Rovere as Pope Julius II., had been seized by the latter as soon as he had secured the tiara for which he had not scrupled to pay court to his hereditary and dangerous foe ; whilst the prudence which had dictated to Rodrigo Borgia's son the advisability of placing part, at least, of his wealth in reserve in France, under the faithful guard of his forsaken wife, had been amply justified by after-events, since many precious articles, gold, jewels, and wearing

apparel, valued at 30,000 ducats, and entrusted by Cesare to Cardinal d'Este, had been confiscated, on January 2, 1504, by Giovanni Bentivoglio.

In his dilemma the refugee of Pampeluna turned with every confidence to France. He had already made attempts to regain the forfeited favour of his former French ally. From his captivity, in the fortress of Chinchilla he had already requested his brother-in-law, Jean d'Albret, to whom he sent the requisite power of attorney, to endeavour to obtain for him from Louis XII. the 100,000 francs which the latter had promised as the dowry of the Duchesse de Valentinois, his "very dear wife."

On somewhat slight foundations, certain Borgia historians have supported the tradition which declares that Charlotte d'Albret rejoined her husband in Spain after his escape from La Mota, the legend being chiefly based on Zurita's statement that "the Duc de Valentinois left one daughter behind him at his death, whom he placed in the tutelage of her mother and of her uncle, the King of Navarre." There is, however, no evidence forthcoming in favour of this suggestion. The Duchesse de Valentinois, however eagerly her steps would have followed the impulse of her heart towards reunion with her husband, does not appear to have quitted La Motte Feuilly from the date on which she became its châtelaine. The iron will which kept her at a distance from Italy, would have found means, it may be confidently assumed, to put the same unbridged distance between her and Pampeluna. Letters, no doubt, passed between husband and wife; he had need of her dowry; she would probably send him money or jewels; he would rest content, wanting nothing more, with this. Patience was her part;

her rehearsals had been long and arduous ; she would continue to await her lord's pleasure where he had consigned her.

It may be assumed that the King of Navarre failed in his mission ; and the marked disfavour with which the French King was beginning to visit the d'Albret family, of whom he had not hesitated to make catspaws when it suited him, his irritation and resentment against the Borgias, did not augur well for a second attempt.

There remained to Cesare, however, his faithful friend and major-domo, Requesenz, who had followed his waning fortunes to the threshold of his prison, and who was first at his side in the hour of his deliverance. To this loyal adherent, the Duc de Valentinois entrusted the delicate mission from which policy and prudence alike deterred his kinsman.

In January, 1507, Requesenz arrived at Bourges, where Louis was then holding his court, and, it may be not without some trepidation, proffered his master's twofold request—first, that he might be allowed to place his recovered sword once more at the service of his ancient ally, and secondly, that the more pressing and personal matter of the Duchess's dowry might receive immediate consideration.

Requesenz's arrival at Bourges was ill-timed. He was accredited to a disappointed and irritable man, a man who was being reminded by the very walls within which he was holding his temporary court of the price he had paid for dust and ashes. He was in the shrine of a saint, who had been his ill-requited, faithful wife ; fresh from kneeling in secret, as we cannot doubt he must often have knelt, before that shrine, he would be in no humour, risen from his knees, to look kindly upon any emissary of the man

to whose base ambitions he had deliberately sacrificed that saintly soul. And not Jeanne de Valois alone.

There can be little doubt that, whether acting on his own initiative, or inspired before leaving Pampe-luna by his master, Requesenz would, almost certainly, have sought out, at Issoudun, the co-operation in his mission of the one advocate on whose support he could count, and with whom at his side he must assuredly carry his task to victory. It seems likely, moreover, bearing in mind on what errand Requesenz was bound for Berry, that Cesare sent letters by his trusted servant's hand to his wife. We can easily picture their tenor, if not their exact wording. She was to use all the influence still remaining to her with both Anne and Louis, to obtain from the King the boon her husband craved. To do this, would be the short cut to that happiness on which he, no less than herself, had counted for all these years of inevitable separation—the happiness of reunion, to which he looked forward no less eagerly, he would assure her, than herself.

By letter, as well as by word of mouth, Cesare, when it suited his purpose, could be no less winning than plausible. But if Charlotte, mounting her satin-lined litter, and warmly wrapped in her sables, took the road of many memories to Bourges, accompanied by her husband's ambassador, she was only the unconscious instrument whom the justice of fate ordained to turn the key in the last door of hope for him before whose conqueror's step so many blood-besprinkled portals of glory had once been flung wide. The very sight of her would rouse the man who had offered her up, at the side of Jeanne de Valois, in hideous sacrifice to his own personal and political

passions, to a fury of mingled anger with himself and rage against the thing for which he had sacrificed such purity and goodness.

Charlotte would plead eloquently, we may be sure. Requesenz, standing by, would congratulate himself, seeing his cause already won, for bringing so powerful an ally in his train. He would not see, as Louis must, the forbidding spectres that forgathered to this last pronouncing of human judgment on Cesare Borgia.

But on Louis, whose eyes had been opened too late, those pale censors laid commands he dare not disobey. Listening coldly to the pleading of wife and friend, there would crowd, ever more and more thickly, upon his cloud-cleared vision, the wreckage of the hopes, the schemes, the ambitions for which he had struck "rash leagues" of friendship with the House of Borgia. Phantom crowns of Milan, of Naples, of Jerusalem; lordship of Italy; and, nearer home, the sword, ever turning in his heart, of his sonless state, of the thought that no child who called him father should be King of France after him; above all, must there not have leapt, straight from the pale, patient face of Charlotte d'Albret, slowly flushing with something of the rose of youth, as she pleaded that unworthy cause with all a girl's eagerness and enthusiasm the sharpest arrow of all—this deserted wife reminding him of his life's crowning failure, that for which Charlotte d'Albret, too, had paid her price, his own marriage with Anne de Bretagne, which had given her duchy, indeed, to France, but had only brought to her suzerain the sway of a domestic tyrant, of a domestic domination which threatened, not only to rob his closing years of peace at home, but also to bring upon France, through



END VIEW OF THE CHAPEL OF THE ANNONCIADES, BOURGES.



a self-willed woman's ambition for her child, the yoke of Imperial Austria.

Requenz and Charlotte d'Albret were foredoomed to failure when they sought mercy, or even justice, such as they deemed it, at the hands of Louis XII. for Cesare Borgia. Not only had they to bear to the impatient refugee of Pampeluna the emphatic refusal of the French King to accede to his demands; he is to be the poorer for their ill-advised intervention.

On February 18, 1507, by royal letters-patent, signed at Bourges, it was decreed that the Duc de Valentinois had forfeited all his rights to the lordship of Issoudun, and to the tax on salt, granted him at the same time, "for his treachery toward his former ally during the wars in Italy." The document in question, which has been preserved amongst the archives of the time, deals at some length with the specified treachery for which Louis took revenge on the despoiled Duke. Cesare's "nasty tricks," as history calls them, towards the French King were threefold: first, his conduct towards Florence, which he presumed to threaten, in spite of its being under the protection of his ally; secondly, with regard to Pisa, of which he had had the presumption to accept the protectorate, while nominally under the French banner; and lastly, the bold and defiant attempt which he had made, in spite of the French King's plain prohibition, to drive the Bentivoglio from Bologna. For these irrefutable proofs of his ancient ally's "great ingratitude," which had wrought both army and kingdom "great and irreparable damage," Louis felt himself fully justified—and the verdict of history is on his side—in withdrawing from Issoudun the "odious protection" of Cesare Borgia.

With characteristic meanness, Louis proceeded

further to include the innocent wife in the punishment which he had meted out to the worthless husband, reducing the dowry of the Duchesse de Valentinois at the same time to 4,000 *livres tournois*. Securely settled, however, at this time, at La Motte Feuilly, and still holding, unshaken, the confidence of rejoining her husband, even now, it is probable that Charlotte quitted Issoudun without any regret, although, as her will shows, she kept its poor and those who tended them, both in soul and body, in practical remembrance to the last hour of her life.

Far otherwise would the news of this last crushing blow to his schemes for the future find Cesare Borgia. Thenceforth, burning to be revenged on his two mortal enemies, Louis XII. and Pope Julius II., he is all Navarre's. That sword which had been coldly declined by Louis, should yet carve its wielder a way to even loftier destinies than those from which he had been suddenly cast down by his own weapons of secret death in the wine-cup of the Belvedere.

Finality of fate, we can well believe, would have been the last sentence which Cesare Borgia would read between the lines of the spiteful edict of Bourges. He could not bring himself to believe that he was a beaten man, that fortune had in store for him, though she had restored his liberty to him with one hand, but a crowning, cruel cast of her shuttle in the other. Fury of tempests he had himself provoked had bowed him indeed to the earth, but they had not broken his indomitable spirit. It was impossible that his perilous descent by a ladder of rope from his prison-house of Medina del Campo had but left him stranded on a stage where there was no longer a rôle for him to fill. The sword which France had

scorned should be laid at the feet of Maximilian, whose old scores against the House of Valois still rankled, and whose projected expedition against the Kings of France and Spain would give that "Queen of Swords" a chance once more to flash across the gaze of Europe.

The resolve of the Borgia to enter the service of Maximilian was no sudden impulse of a desperate man. It had been slowly moulded and matured in the depths of a dungeon, only needing the spite of Louis XII. to bring the growing purpose to a head. But peace must first be restored to Navarre, who should profit also by the humiliation of that crafty foe ever prowling on her coveted frontier. Louis de Beaumont, Comte de Lerin, secretly attracted to the Spanish side, was in open revolt against the standard of d'Albret of Navarre. To reduce him to obedience, as a preliminary to taking a wider field, was a task after Cesare's own heart. On February 11, 1507, while still awaiting the result of his major-domo's mission to France, the Duc de Valentinois proceeded to invest the fortress of Larraga, the chief stronghold of the rebel faction.

It is the moment when we, who know the end while still onlookers at the beginning, can find it in us to pity Cesare Borgia for the first and last time in his meteoric history. He had climbed to such heights. He had fallen from such a pinnacle. And now, the hunger of the wild beast, "with cut claws and plans in irretrievable confusion," was over. We can picture him, as he rode gaily forth from Pampe-luna to conquer fresh worlds, with something of the old laughter-loving youth, the splendour of half-forgotten dreams, given back to him; the brooding clouds of despair and melancholy and mortification,

lifted from his face, set as it was towards the dawn of a new day.

And all the while, short shrift stalked unseen beside him who had once presumed to teach the Roman people repentance for the wagging of careless tongues against his evil-doing. Drawn into an ambuscade near Viana, he fell, one against many, pierced with wounds, fighting valiantly to the last. Our final vision of him is of a madman, with snarling cries of blasphemy on his lips, as he realised fate's true name of *The End*—of a bloody corpse, stripped and stark and solitary—the lurid setting of a stormy sun.

## CHAPTER XXIV

The news comes to La Motte Feully—The last dereliction—The Château in mourning—Little Louise in black serge—Viana and Bourges—The Dame de Chalus.

WE do not know how the tidings of her husband's death reached Charlotte d'Albret; where the letter found her, brought by whose hand we may not trace, in which Jean d'Albret wrote to his sister—as a man would—that, if, as the old chronicler puts it, "*La sage et vertueuse Princesse Charlotte d'Albret n'eut pas peu à souffrir avec Cesare Borgia, son mari, pour ses mauvaises mœurs et déportements,*" he had at least known how to keep faith with her House, in whose cause he had met his soldier's death at last. Faithless husband, but loyal friend! Poor comfort, yet how often flung—always by a man's hand—at women's breaking hearts! One heart at least, called to hear such consolation, broke slowly, though surely, with the hearing, despite a brother's well-meant essay towards condolence of this kind.

Once more we are driven back upon the wideness of the gulf of unlikeness that for ever yawns between Charlotte d'Albret and her sister-in-law, Lucrezia Borgia. History, which invariably assigns to the actor the applause which he plays to win, bestows upon the grief of Lucrezia, the demure, decorous devotee of the court of Ferrara, at the tragic tidings from Viana, the sympathetic commendation which

her shining hair and child-like smile demand, whilst it sets small store by that other, less stormy, less theatrical grief of the wife of Cesare Borgia. We do not know, but we can picture, where the coming of a grief that was to kill found the friend of St. Jeanne de Valois; the arms of the Celestial Brother and Bridegroom were still stretched wide to welcome all that "travailed, and were heavy-laden." Had Charlotte d'Albret turned from their embrace in the hour of her supreme sorrow, she would be unworthy to stand, while the memory of her lasts, beside the "Good Duchesse," Jeanne de France.

Where, all said and done, should we look to find her, if not here? Prostrate before the Crucifix, with streaming eyes and frail body shaken by speechless sobs, she was not only the Christian mourner invoking the Divine mercy on a soul that had never shown it to any other in life; she was the widowed wife, surrounded, while her piteous intercessions went up for the bloodstained soul of Cesare Borgia, by all the flotsam splendours of the cardinalate he had profaned in his youth.

Wheresoever those streaming eyes might fall, they would behold, blurred through a mist of tears, the silent symbols of the high and holy office of which Rodrigo Borgia's son had rid himself as lightly as of his obligations of husband and father. Tall altar-candlesticks—"of Italian workmanship"—with leaves of gold entwined about their towering height; swaying silver lamps; incense-burner and fair linen; silver-clasped Mass-book; that splendid bénitier of agate, "mounted in silver, gilt, half a foot long and the same in width, with a handle, valued at 8,000 crowns." "Sans doute," says M. Bonnaffé, "une merveille de provenance italienne,

un souvenir des splendeurs du cardinal Borgia"; accusers all—where was the vineyard of which these lustrous grapes of the sanctuary were the late, last gathering?

Epitaphs in plenty are at our disposal, do we desire to bestow them on that grave still guarded—beneath what stone no certainty may decide—by that genius of mystery which is the *impresa* par excellence of the Borgia fate. We may write, if we will, that here, the place known only to the covering, unidentified slab, lies one who, "like Tiberius of old, was the handsomest man of his time." Or, we may say with Brantôme, that "in his time he did both good and evil"; with M. Yriarte, that "in youth he was a murderer, in youth a conqueror, and in youth he died"; with Machiavelli, that he was the ideal "hero of political romance," one to whom "nothing was sacred, whom nothing could daunt, who never for a moment sacrificed reason to passion, incapable of weakness or fatigue." Or, we may ponder on the grandiloquent description on his tomb at Viana:

"Here a little earth holds him all the world feared. In this narrow space is enclosed he who held both war and peace in his hand. O you who seek things worthy of admiration, if the greatest is the most worthy, here your journey ends. From here you may retrace your steps."

Finally, we may decide, with the flippancy of Fleurange, that we will say no more touching either his virtues or his vices; for of both, enough, nay, too much, has already been said, save this only: that in war he was good comrade and brave man.

Yet, for the purposes of this book, but one epitaph

may suffice. Charlotte d'Albret loved him. That it should be so, that virtue so fastidious, so exquisite in its purity, so unsullied in its reputation, should have found aught to love in the vices with which the futile policy of king and prelate conjoined her, may present unanswerable difficulties, impenetrable mystery. The fact remains. To us, who view him across the centuries, now, futilely scourged, now as futilely whitewashed, there seems little in that unscrupulous condottiere to have made him worth loving. Yet, the charm which he used so often for basest ends, the charm which was part of the Borgia inheritance, must needs have laid its spell on her, who knew him, it may be, at his best in those three brief months which enshrined for her an image which was not powerful enough to compel her to live after life was emptied of all hope of once more beholding the original.

Women's hearts break still, as they broke then, for love of the men who never existed save in the pure fancy of an idyllic passion which they were utterly unworthy to inspire. But no heart ever broke save for love such as Charlotte d'Albret bore to the husband who forsook her, that least-prized, because purest, possession of Cesare Borgia. She may have gone to him an unwilling bride, but that mourning, prostrate figure beneath the giant yew of La Motte Feuilly, those haunted rooms with sable hangings, attest that she had learnt to love her worthless lord before their eternal parting. If light is at the last to stream across that secret sepulchre upon that unquiet spirit, it must issue from that pathetic passion, that love which gave all, asking nothing, to which eternity, by its very quality, is assured.

There is no more surprising coincidence in the story of this ill-assorted pair than that which befell them after death. Widely separated as they had been in life, by temperament, by tastes, by the impassable gulf, in short, which not even the temporal union of the flesh may be permitted to bridge, between the bloodstained builder of houses called by his odious name, that perished in the using, and one whose pure feet were set on the highway and the way which the unclean may not pass over—past separation such as this, we find the ashes of Cesare Borgia and Charlotte d'Albret destined not indeed to mingle in the tomb, but to undergo there some likeness of outrage and desecration.

We shall stand, at the close of this volume, for a little while, reverent and regretful, before the splendid cenotaph fashioned by a chisel obedient to remembering and revering love over the broken heart of Charlotte d'Albret. We shall seek, beside the grave of Jeanne de Valois in her convent cloisters at Bourges, the last resting-place of one who found shelter from the storms of life where she had never failed to find it this side of the Haven where they cease. We shall seek, and shall not find. Fiercer tempests than those which laid them low have swept that sister-dust from the sepulchres where they might well have been permitted to sleep, undisturbed, until the day break. Iconoclast and fanatic have scattered that pure dust to the winds; fire has utterly consumed it.

Yet still, as we turn, saddened, from those rifled and desecrated graves, to wander through the haunted streets of Bourges, to question its storied walls, and to stand in the shadow of its superb cathedral, there come to us, as from aumbries

of unearthly fashioning, divine odours of the poet's meaning :

"Only the actions of the just  
Smell sweet and blossom in the dust."

At Viana, as in Berry, the curious (since it may scarcely be the reverent) are foredoomed, when they seek the grave of Cesare Borgia, to a fruitless quest. At La Motte Feuilly, a tomb restored ; at Santa Maria de Viana, "two stones embedded in a pilaster of the High Altar." Neither saint nor sinner has been safe in death from the rude handling of ruffian and rowdy. No trace remains of the splendid tomb erected over the body of Cesare Borgia. The Spanish chroniclers relate that an eighteenth-century Bishop of Calahorra, offended by that constant reminder, as he officiated at the altar, of a dead man steeped in crime, ordered the destruction of the monument, and the committal of the bones of the great condottiere to an obscure, untraceable grave.

The widowed Duchess rose from her knees to give commands, to assume herself, and to impose upon her child, her household, and her apartments, the mourning which they were never to lay aside. It was the custom of the times ; remarkable only in this widow of twenty-five, because it was lifelong. We are permitted, through the medium of the "indispensable 'Inventaire,' " to assist at every detail of the manner in which the "mobilier de deuil" was carried out. For the widow, cloth of gold, satin, velvet, and damask robes, no more ; the leather-covered lid of the great coffers where they were found after her death fall over their folded splendours with a thud of irrevocable parting, as of heavy clods on the newly lowered coffin.

The Duchesse de Valentinois will "go softly" all the years of her life to come—they were to be but seven—in austere simple gowns of black cloth, hemmed and outlined at wrist and shoulder with ermine or sable. Little Louise must share her mother's mourning in plain black serge. Madame and Mademoiselle alike must be in mourning even while they sleep—the mother beneath "a canopy of black damask with hangings of the same, lined with black cloth, and black silk ornaments," a counterpane of the same; the daughter in her "great bed of black serge with hangings of the same." Only, as the years went on, there must have been some lightening of this funereal couch—for Maître Dorsanne found, laid upon the little bed where Mademoiselle slept, "a blue rug and a white." Madame will go abroad again, as before; but her well-trained palfrey must be content to doff its crimson trappings for others of black velvet; here is work for Baudet des Bources the tapissier, with André de Ventignat the groom, and Antoine Nicole the muleteer, it may be, looking on, to see to the covering of the whole harness with black velvet.

Distracted and dissatisfied, Nicholas le Mercier, with a whole army of subordinates at his disposal, must be sent and summoned from pillar to post, superintending the carrying out of his lady's directions. What it must have cost the worthy servitor to assist at the dismantling of the tapestried walls, at the rolling up of hangings, carpets, curtains, their storing away in the great chests; at the replacing of gaily embroidered cushions, stately chairs, and all the appointments of the rooms in which he had taken such pride, by this depressing cloud of black, descending—le Bon Dieu forgive him for the thought—

for that scoundrel of a Pope's son, of whom the world, and above all, his saintly mistress, was well rid !

The good le Mercier would mingle his groans with those of his colleague, Etienne Gueriton, who must see the choicest of the gold and silver ware committed to his charge repose henceforth in the recesses of the plate-chest, while he must content himself with the custody of the "*orfèvrerie de tous les jours*." An altar-cloth of black brocaded velvet for the chapel ; those superb sets of vestments, chasubles, stole, maniples, copes of cloth of gold, figured with green, of crimson damask—must be laid reverently away ; above all, that splendid chasuble of cloth of gold, with diadem and orphreys, and in the said diadem a cross and Our Lady of Pity—her mild gaze is not yet to be borne by her who remembers that this garment, meet for the antechamber of a king, gleams and shimmers with threads of gold and violet and azure, filched from the sky, the sunshine, and the violets of Italy.

All around Charlotte d'Albret, then, by day, by night, sleeping or waking, while she slept and when she prayed, alone or with her child, mounted on her saddle of black velvet, or rapt in reverie under the ancient yew that has outlasted her "old, unhappy, far-off" story, that sable background only intensified the one spot of colour that flamed against it, that mantle of kingly scarlet—fit symbol of the Borgia passion for pomp and pageant, last flaring out of the Borgia vision of the beckoning Double Crown—in which Jean d'Albret had wrapped the stripped and naked body of the dead Duc de Valentinois. It was the symbol that was to light his wife's way also to the tomb. She lived, indeed, for six

years longer, doing her work, and taking kindly thought for others ; but life had been over for her when the arrow sped to her heart from Viana.

Two years after the death of her husband, and when she had been châtelaine of La Motte Feuilly for five, Charlotte d'Albret acquired from Marie, Comtesse de Vermandois, her lands and lordship of Chalus for the sum of 17,000 crowns, as witness the title-deeds found in a leather pouch amongst the effects of the dead Duchess. It was from this property that Charlotte derived her later title of Dame de Chalus.

## CHAPTER XXV

Death of Charlotte d'Albret—Her last will and testament—Some of its provisions—Her chosen burial-place—The tomb of her heart—How it fared with those who shaped her fate.

ON March 11, 1514, worthy Maître Germain Colhadon, licentiate-at-law, keeper of the seal of the provostship and castellany of La Motte Feuilly, was summoned with all despatch to the Château, where Madame la Duchesse de Valentinois was about to yield her pure soul to God, but first desiring, good Christian citizen as she was, to set all her worldly affairs in order. She was facing death, we may rest assured, with calm courage. Not otherwise should we expect the friend and pupil of Sainte Jeanne de France to face it. She had mastered every line of the lessons which the sorrows of her brief life and her revered and beloved tutoress alike had taught her—the lessons of brave endurance and entire submission to the Divine Will.

She was not to die alone, lonely as she had been for fifteen years in the deepest depths of her being. "A few poor peasants," her pensioners, were admitted, we are told, to the courtyard of the Château, that there, where they had so often received from her bountiful hands the never-failing dole, they might speed the parting soul of their beloved benefactress with pious intercessions and tears of heartfelt sorrow and regret. At the dying woman's bedside was her

chaplain, Messire André Richomme, who was to hear her last confession, and who would thereafter speed the shriven soul on its last journey with the unspeakable Viaticum. There, too, his unavailing skill and service having done all that man might do, stood her physician, the "discreet and honourable Master Sebastian Coppain, doctor of medicine." In the presence of these two good servants and friends, the physician of the soul and the physician of the body, Charlotte d'Albret dictated her last will and testament to the notary, Martin Amison.

First, she gave her soul to God, entreating the Blessed Virgin, Mother of Sorrows, and Patroness of the Order to which, being in this, as in all things, the perfect follower of the Blessed Jeanne, she, too, was tenderly attached, together with the Archangel Michael, to be her intercessors with Our Lord Jesus Christ in the hour of her death. What memories, welling up from ebbing pulses to glazing eyes, must have surged and swept across that passing soul! Memories evoked by that name of the great captain of the hosts of Heaven! Memories of Nérac of the fair waters, cradle of her House and of her childhood, on whose castle walls the Angel-Saint, "Milord Saint Michel the Archangel," wrestled in stone with the power of evil! Memories, too, of that stately investiture at the Pentecost of 1499, when Cesare Borgia, in all the flush and flower of his pomp and pride, swore fealty to France under the banner of St. Michael.

To the intercession of the Church triumphant were to be united the supplications of the living on earth. There are precise directions as to the number of Masses to be offered for the repose of the soul of the testator, where they are to be offered, and at

what cost. To the Convent of the Annonciades at Bourges she bequeaths 100 *livres tournois* annually, or a legacy of 1,000 francs, for a Mass to be said in perpetuity by the canons of Saint Sire of Issoudun ; a bequest of 120 *livres* to the monks of Notre Dame in the same town are to be applied to the same purpose. All the vestments belonging to the chapel of La Motte Feuilly are to pass into the keeping of the nuns of the Annonciades, with the exception of certain reserved for use in her daughter's chapel. To the Franciscan friars of Issoudun she leaves 30 francs, with a length of four and a half ells of white satin.

Her body is to find a last resting-place, so she decrees by her will, beside the crowned nun whom she had survived for nine years. "How touching," writes M. Maulde de la Clavière, "is this reunion, in the final, unending companionship of the tomb, of two women already bound together in life by that other companionship of grief !"

Bourges, however, was not to claim all that was mortal of Charlotte d'Albret. In death, as in life, hers is to be a destiny stamped with the seal of separation. Living, her body had remained in France, while her heart had followed in the chequered footsteps of Cesare Borgia. In death that broken heart is to be taken from her body, and deposited in the Church of La Motte Feuilly.

"All her household who had served her during her lifetime," that is to say, the gentlemen of her little court, are enjoined to bear her body to Bourges, and there lay it to its last rest beside Madame the late Duchesse de Berry. This duty we may confidently expect was piously fulfilled. As piously the nuns of the Annonciades made room for their founder's friend beside their sainted Superior.



**THE CHURCH OF LA MOTTE FEULLY.**

From a photograph by Dagois, Issoudun.



**THE TOMB OF CHARLOTTE D'ALBRET.**

From a photograph by Dagois, Issoudun.



Every year, until the dispersion of the Order, the following eulogy was pronounced in Latin at the altar of the Annonciades on the anniversary of the death of the Duchesse de Valentinois :

"The illustrious and generous lady, Charlotte d'Albret, in her lifetime Duchesse de Valentinois, passed from this life to the other endowed with sundry graces, manifesting by her humility and devotion that she had faith in the prayers of this Community. She bequeathed to it at her death several benefactions, desiring to be buried within its walls, meriting that every Saturday Mass should be offered for the repose of her soul."

Elsewhere we shall see that none were forgotten, all remembered, in Charlotte's will. And so, with her unresponsive hand in that of the daughter from whom she was to part, the last pang she was called upon to endure, the invalid's feeding-cup ("biberon pour servir à malades" of the "Inventaire") having been held for the last time to her parched lips, the Duchesse de Valentinois breathed her last, the day of her death being that on which she made her will.<sup>1</sup>

If retributive justice is not still a force to be reckoned with in the affairs of men, rather than a mere fiction of the monastic mind, it will be of slight interest to pursue to the end that crowns all those who took part in building up the tragedies of the lives of Charlotte d'Albret and Sainte Jeanne de France. "You cannot do wrong," says the philosopher of Concord, "without suffering wrong." In these two companions of the Sorrowful Way, we have

<sup>1</sup> The document will be found as in the original in the appendix to this volume.

seen wrongs endured with calm resignation transmuted in the souls that bore them to the imperishable substance of fine gold.

How was it with those who dealt the wrong? Pass by the Borgia, lying, naked and bleeding, in his nameless tomb. How was it with Louis XII., despoiled and disappointed, as sovereign, as soldier, as statesman, dominated by an exacting wife, haunted by the memory of a saint whom he had sacrificed? How was it with Georges d'Amboise, the astute, ambitious Minister of a perjured King, who had set his seal to the infamous contract which had betrayed innocent girlhood into the hands of an apostate ruffian? He earned his reward—the Cardinal's hat; but the loftier dream, the triple crown, was to perish, like the state of Cesare Borgia, in vanishing vapour of a vision.

How was it with the little kingdom of Navarre, which bought consolation for all its woes with the happiness of its King's sister? Like the phantom crowns of Milan, of Naples, and of Jerusalem, this, too, was to pass from the keeping of him who had borne his part, with light-hearted irresponsibility, in the drama of the Valentinois-d'Albret alliance. What of the veteran intriguer, the crafty huckster, who had sold his own flesh and blood into captivity? Is it justice, or else a phantom, that stands beside his lonely death-bed at Casteljaloux in 1522, amongst the crowd of priests that surround it, as he lies clad for his last journey, no longer splendid, as in bygone days of fête and foray, but in the simple habit of St. Francis? Royal favour, kinship with crowns, the dream, above all, of his never-founded Gascon dynasty, all have vanished. He has lived long enough to see his great inheritance slip from his

hands—the same hands that gave his child into the keeping of the Borgia.

Is it all mere coincidence, fantastic imagining, or the ordered revolution, rather, of inevitable recoil, the recoil of the shuttle first flung by compulsion of the overweening, vainglorious ambitions of Cesare Borgia? Drawn of their own free will within the toils of the Borgian policy that spared no living thing in its passage to its ends, were his accomplices to pass scathless through the fire that they had helped to kindle? If it were so, then crime and punishment have ceased “to grow out of one stem.”

## CHAPTER XXVI

Louise Borgia—Her childhood—Marriages that might have been made for her—Her mother's will in its bearing on her life—Letters to her kinsfolk—Her marriage—Louis de la Trémoille pays homage to her virtues—Her mother's child—Glimpses of her after-life—Her second marriage—Her children—The Duchy of Valentinois.

LOUISE BORGIA, the only child of the Duc and Duchesse de Valentinois, is a most pathetic figure as we see her for the first time in the pages of the inventory compiled at her request—"ce jourduy à la requeste de damoiselle Loyse, seule fille et heritière universelle de ladicte dame," as Maître Jacques Dorsanne has it—a slim, lonely little figure in her mourning gown of nun-like black serge. The motherless child of fourteen, standing for seven years in the shadow of the deeper mourning for her redoubtable, unknown father, which the Duchesse de Valentinois had imposed, according to the fashion of the time, not only upon the persons, but upon the very walls and furniture which surrounded them, of her daughter and herself, seems to blot out the infancy and childhood of brighter hues which had happily gone before. No shadow of her mother's ever-present sorrow was ever allowed to fall across her cradle. Louise had been the idol and sole consolation of one to whom she stood for all that was sweetest and saddest in memory.

From her birth, mother and child had never been

separated. Night and day, each had always been within reach, within call, of one another. Mademoiselle's room at La Motte Feuilly, with its window looking out on the courtyard, was only divided from that occupied by her mother by a staircase and a small dressing-closet. There were but a few steps—soon taken by little, flying feet—to be traversed, to be “with Mother,” then, as now, may we not be sure, haven, paradise, enchanted kingdom, for a child. Mothers, then, as now, kept secret hoards—in drawer or drageoir—to taste the sweeter from their hand.

There are human touches in the inventory, after all. Here is one: “Another coffer covered with worn leather, in which was found a basket of figs and prunes.” What is this little rush “cabas” doing here, amid all the splendours of Madame la Duchesse's apartment, on a little table at her bedside? For whom, if not for little Louise, scampering in at daybreak in quest of her mother's morning kiss, clambering, riotous and unawed, into that sumptuous, stately bed, nestling down, unabashed by all its gleam and glitter of queenly canopies, into those protecting arms, that close embrace, then, reaching over the richly embroidered counterpane to thrust eager little fingers into the never-failing store of “goodies” at “Mother's” disposal to bestow?

Yes, Louise had had her Golden Age, worth all that come after, though they, too, prove aureate. She had not always worn this nun's habit of sombre serge, nor always slept beneath a canopy of funereal black. Mademoiselle's wardrobe contained “a gown of cloth of gold, with a surcoat of the same,” a “bodice and sleeves of crimson velvet,” a “surcoat of white satin.” Once, she had slept, little Princess as she was, in a bed no less splendid than her mother's,

canopied with violet damask and yellow satin, fringed with silk to match, the curtains of blue and yellow taffetas. Her baby-chair was upholstered in green velvet, with another to sit at table at her mother's side, while her walls were hung with needle-work forests of foliage that nodded and rustled softly through her childish dreams.

With the death of her husband, their child became the still more engrossing object of her mother's love. "Widowed at twenty-five, beautiful, mistress of a great fortune," thus M. Bonnaffé writes of the Duchesse de Valentinois, "she consecrated her entire life henceforth to God and to her child," whom "she cared for and brought up," adds Hilarion de Coste, "with the watchful and unceasing guardianship of a good and prudent mother." She had her reward. Louise Borgia was her mother's child. We shall hear the husband to whom she afterwards gave her hand laying that tribute on Charlotte d'Albret's tomb.

One terrifying moment there had been—happily, it had passed, with the passing of the state of the Duc de Valentinois and Romagna. But, while the fear lasted, Charlotte must have trembled for her child. In those days of despair and darkness which fell upon the prisoner of Julius II. in the fortress of St. Angelo, it seemed as though the cruel hand of Cesare Borgia was about to reach out across the Alps to snatch from the wife whom he had consigned to a captivity scarcely less intolerable than his own the child he had never cared to seek.

On October 29, 1503, at a secret meeting between the Borgia and his ancient enemy, a marriage was proposed between della Rovere's nephew and Cesare's little daughter. It was Cesare Borgia's last cast for freedom, for retrieval of his lost estate, and to win

back these priceless things he would not have scrupled to add yet one more pang to the heart of his forsaken wife, by tearing her adored child from her arms. Fate, however, had a happier lot in store for Louise Borgia, as the wife of two noble French gentlemen in succession.

A second Italian alliance had also been suggested for Cesare Borgia's daughter, her hand having been sought, states Gregorovius, by Isabella of Mantua for her eldest son. Charlotte d'Albret's daughter, however, was happily destined, as we have said, to find a home to the end of her life in France. As the child Louise follows in the wake of Maître Dorsanne and the household, who must witness the taking of the inventory, she must have keenly realised that the days which had kept their glamour, even though all around her wore mourning for one who so little deserved it, were over now. She, for whom the all-encompassing, all-comprehending mother-love, had always taken thought, must henceforth take thought for herself. She is confronted with the burden and responsibility of a great inheritance. She, who had never known a want that a mother could supply, must explain to Maître Dorsanne that she has "run short of ready money," must ask his permission to withdraw from the valuation which is proceeding, in order to meet certain pressing claims, to pay certain small legacies to persons named in her mother's will, a gold chain weighing thirteen marcs. By permission also, and not otherwise, may she take and retain for her own use eight gold buttons, "somewhat the worse for wear," from a little casket, belonging to her mother, covered with brocaded satin.

Louise Borgia did not only stand alone at her dead mother's graveside. To loneliness must be

added the shrinking apprehension with which a child looks forward to passing into the guardianship of comparative strangers, to unfamiliar surroundings. True, she is to keep with her, as we have seen, her own and her mother's faithful attendants, Catherine de Regnard and Catherine Dalluies, but a distant kinswoman only is to take her mother's place.

By her last will and testament, Charlotte d'Albret committed the care and custody of her only child and sole heiress to Madame d'Angoulême, Louise de Savoie, mother of the heir to the throne of France, afterwards François I., in the following terms :

“ Item ordonne la dite dame que ma dite damoiselle sa fille soit menée à madame d'Angoulême, et livrés tous ses biens afin de les bien garder à sa dite fille en bonne sureté, laquelle elle fait sa seule et universelle heritière, ordonnant aussi la dite dame que la gouvernante de sa dite fille mademoiselle de Toutvent, demeure avec elle pour la servir, et lui donne cinquante *livres tournoises* de gages, et aussi que la nièce de la dite mademoiselle de Toutvent demeure avec la dite damoiselle sa fille.”

At some of the motives by which Charlotte d'Albret was influenced in her choice of Louise d'Angoulême in this connection, we can but guess. Obviously, there was the tie of blood. The elder woman was what was known as “ Breton aunt ” to Charlotte. The father of Louise had been a son of Catherine Rohan, while Alain d'Albret was cousin-german of Madame d'Angoulême's husband, Charles d'Orléans, Seigneur de Romorantin, and Villedieu, in Berry. The kinship was further strengthened by the second marriage of the countess's father, Philippe, Duc de Savoie, widower of Marguerite de Bourbon, with

Claude de Brosse, or de Bretagne, cousin-german of Charlotte d'Albret. The Duchesse de Valentinois would be prompted, moreover, it is easy to suppose, by the natural maternal desire to place her orphaned heiress in keeping which would ensure for her a place at court worthy of her rank, and eventually, a suitable marriage.

Or was it, over and above these considerations of parentage and policy, some sweetly sacred, secret memory of Romorantin—the scene and shrine of those last brief days of wedded companionship with Cesare Borgia—that influenced Charlotte d'Albret in thus disposing of her child's future? Was the baby Louise, like Claude of France, daughter of Anne de Bretagne, born in Madame d'Angoulême's "house at Romorantin"? Did the young mother turn in her hour of supreme trial, when the pangs of maternity were intensified by her heart's desolation, to Louise de Savoie as to a mother, to seek and find support and solicitude the remembrance of which was to inspire the confidence with which, fourteen years later, we see her committing to the care of the liege lady of Romorantin the precious treasure born of her ill-fated wedlock? It may well be so. We know that the two women, strangely dissimilar, if their historians are to be believed, were intimate friends. Louise d'Angoulême had had her say, secret though it may have been, in the shaping of Charlotte d'Albret's destiny, and we may gather from her own written words that the Duchesse de Valentinois held a warm place in her affections—hers who could hate so well.

To the Sire d'Albret Louise d'Angoulême writes of her dead friend in terms of the most sisterly affection and regret. The letter is as follows :

My Cousin,

"You are well aware that my cousin, the Duchesse de Valentinois, your daughter, has departed this life, which I assure you I regret as much as though it had been my own sister; but we must receive with resignation that which it pleases Our Lord to send us. In her will she has directed that her daughter should be entrusted to me, which direction the King has confirmed, sending a commission for her to be confided to me, together with her goods; and were it not for the love which I bear you, and which I also bore her mother, and that I truly desire to do all I can for you and yours, I assure you that I would not willingly have undertaken this charge. And in order that you should know the facts as to what property she has, I beg of you to send one of your gentlemen, to witness the taking of the inventory, and who will advise you of all that must be done, and he should be there by Easter, for the sooner the better, in order to obviate the necessary expense which the child must incur, so that I will not have it taken until your representative shall have arrived, and be sure that I will treat her as though she were my daughter, and so, after commending myself most warmly to your remembrance, I bring my letter to a close. Praying God, my cousin, to give you all you most desire.

"At Amboise, April 5, 1514."

Couched in the simplest and most affectionate terms is her letter to the little Louise also. Madame d'Angoulême is not yet the reckless and vindictive regent of later years; an orphaned child might well have hoped from this quaintly-worded missive that her mother's choice of a guardian for her would prove, after all, not amiss. But Louise de Valentinois, as we shall see, was not thus deceived.

"My cousin," writes the elder Louise, "the King has commissioned me to take charge of you and of your goods; I beg of you, therefore, to send M. de Billy to me at Amboise, where I am going, in order that I may advise you through him of all that must be done. Praying God to give you your desire. At Romorantin, the last day of March. In all things  
"Your good cousin,  
"LOUISE."

M. de Billy, Claude de la Perrière, who had been maître d'hôtel to the dead Duchess, was duly despatched to Amboise on the receipt of this letter, and returned from thence with Messire Nicholas Foyal, Seigneur de Herbault, in the Sologne, maître d'hôtel to his Majesty the King, and appointed by Madame d'Angoulême to assist, as her representative, at the taking of the inventory at La Motte Feuilly, as was also the lawyer, Maître Jean Gallus, of Romorantin. The Sire d'Albret was represented by Jean de Pius, Seigneur d'Ambruns, and by Pierre Mosnier, Seigneur de Planeau. Before Maître Jacques Dorsanne had proceeded to the "confection and expedition" of the matter in question, however, we find a note of protest sounded by the child-heiress of La Motte Feuilly.

There is a letter extant written by Louise de Valentinois on May 12, 1514, to her grandfather, the Sire d'Albret, between the lines of which it is easy to gather that the motherless child was not wholly in accord with her dead mother's disposal of her future. She writes to Alain d'Albret as follows: the letter is indeed a pathetic appeal.

"MONSEIGNEUR,

"I commend myself most humbly to your good will. Monseigneur, your gentlemen and those

of Madame d'Angoulême cannot come to any agreement concerning the taking of the inventory of the goods, which they have sealed up, in virtue of their commission, but they have been advised that they should make request to the civil judge to make the said inventory, and leave the goods under seal until I shall have informed you of the facts, in order that you may acquaint me with what you may be pleased to ordain both as to my person and my property, and whether it is your wish that, in accordance with the will of Madame, my late mother, I should go to Madame d'Angoulême, I and my goods. Also, I would that it might be your good pleasure to undertake my wardship yourself. I entreat you most humbly, Monseigneur, that it may be thus. Also, I pray the Blessed Son of God, Monseigneur, to grant you a good life and a long. At La Motte Feuilly, the 12th day of May [1514].

“Madame d'Angoulême has given instructions to one of her *maîtres d'hôtel*, who is here, to say to me that directly the inventory is made, I should join her, which I will not do without letting you know. Be good enough, Monseigneur, to command me as you will as soon as may be, for I am put to great expense here.

“Your most humble and very obedient daughter,  
“LOUISE DE VALENTINOIS.”

His grandchild's pathetic appeal reached an old man whose life and fortunes alike were verging on sunset. He was not disposed, on the one hand, to burden himself with the charge of a young girl, nor, on the other, to run the risk of offending so great a lady as the virtual Queen-Mother of France, with whom it was to his interests to stand well, by withdrawing from her a guardianship which had actually been conferred upon her by his daughter's last will and testament. So far as we know, therefore, the

sole response elicited by Louise de Valentinois' letter to the Sire d'Albret was his association with Madame d'Angoulême in arranging the constitution of a household suitable to her rank for Charlotte d'Albret's heiress.

The document embodying the arrangement is preserved among the archives of the d'Albret family at Pau. Mademoiselle de Valentinois, as she is styled therein, was to be attended by two gentlemen, who were each to receive a salary of 200 *livres tournois* per annum, and take their turns in waiting upon her. Madame de Toutvent's salary of fifty *livres* had already been fixed by Charlotte d'Albret's will. The almoner (who kept the accounts) received eighty *livres*, the wages of a valet de chambre being sixty *livres*, of a muleteer twenty *livres*, of a valet de litière twenty *livres*, and of a groom twenty-four *livres*. Ten sous a day was allotted for the keep of the gentlemen-in-waiting's horses, the almoner and his man receiving seven sous six deniers per day, the valet de chambre four sous, and the muleteer three sous. There were two horses for Mademoiselle's litter, two sumpter-horses, one hackney, a horse for the groom, and six others, their keep not to exceed three sous per day, including shoeing. The total expenses of the household were fixed at 2,517 *livres tournois*.

Indications are not wanting that the faltering yet passionate appeal which went forth from the heart of Charlotte d'Albret's motherless child to her mother's people in the moment of her irreparable bereavement was inspired by a fear of the future to which that mother had consigned her, as it seemed. for the best, and that fear, as children's will, proved prophetic. The archives of Mantua preserve in their keeping to this day an undated, suggestive letter,

written by Louise de Valentinois to Isabella d'Este, sister-in-law of the writer's too famous aunt, Lucrezia —no longer Madonna Lucrezia of the Vatican orgies, but the honoured and flattered consort of Alfonso of Ferrara.

The document is of twofold interest : first, because it seems to prove that there had been some correspondence, during the lifetime of the Duchesse de Valentinois, between Charlotte and her connections by marriage in Italy ; and secondly, because a certain mist of doubt unsolved seems to float about the wording. From internal evidence, it is clear that the letter stood in some sense, as it were, for a secret mission, having been handed to some trusted servant or friend for transmission to Isabella. There is the shadow of trouble in its lines ; the reaching out, moreover, as though by some hereditary, half-conscious impulse, as once before towards Nérac, to that Italy on whose stage her father had played so vast a rôle, and which had filled so large a space in her mother's mournful dreams. It was the antenatal impulse of that mother's heart beyond the Alps.

"Madame," she writes, "with all respect I commend myself to your good grace. Madame, that which I desire above all else in the world is to hear how my good relations and friends are and prosper, and to be advised of you and of Madame the Duchess Ferrara, my aunt. I have given charge to and sent the bearer of this letter to see you, and to advise me of your news. I beg of you, Madame, to send me news of you by him in full. And if it pleases you to hear of mine, he will inform you amply. Madame, I have also charged him to tell you something else from me. I beg of you to believe it, and to be good

enough to help in the matter of which he will speak to you. And in doing so you will make my gratitude always yours. Praying Our Lord to give you a very good and long life. Written at Auxonne this ninth day of July, 15—.

“Your very humble niece and good friend,

“LOUISE DE VALENTINOIS.”

We have no clue to the mystery, great or small, which underlies this appeal—for this it was, though the key to the matter is withheld from us. All was not well, clearly, with the motherless girl when she turned to this stranger in all save name, with a plea for counsel, for protection, for help of some kind. It is the cry of a soul in straits—or perhaps of a body, also, in the like case. Had the child's presentiment proved, as we have said, prophetic? Had the guardianship of Louise d'Angoulême, we pause to wonder, proved less maternal than Charlotte d'Albret had anticipated? Was there friction, misunderstanding, clashing of two strong wills, perhaps, between the two Louises? Was Madame d'Angoulême merely neglectful of her charge, as so great a political lady might well be, or was there coldness, or worse, in her attitude towards her ward? No answer comes to our perplexed questionings across the centuries. We do not even know whether the longed-for reply ever reached Louise de Valentinois; whether Isabella of Mantua ever renewed her former wish to welcome the daughter of Cesare Borgia as her son's wife.

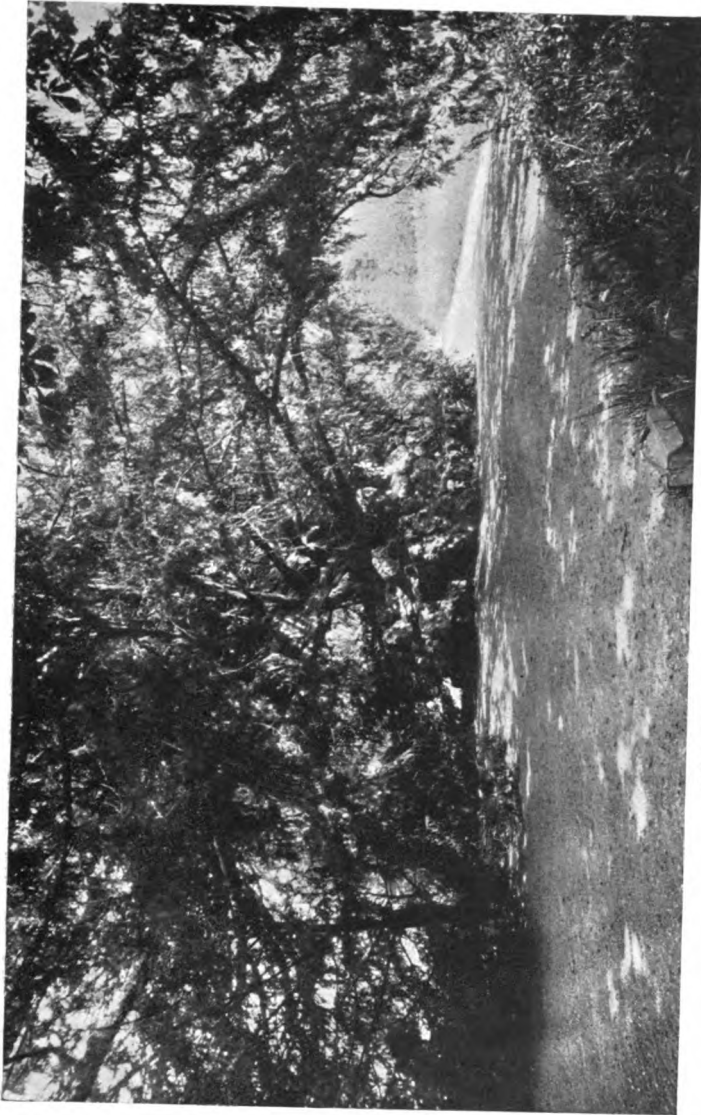
Was it, we may question in passing, some echo of that selfsame wish, shaped out of fugitive gossip of the household of La Motte Feuilly, which may still be read between the lines of that old letter in the archives of the noble House of Este? We cannot tell. Only, it comes to us, unproven, yet probable

to reflect that the ward of Louise d'Angoulême, who was to hound more than one faithful servant of France, who dared to cross her avaricious will, to undeserved death upon the scaffold, may well have wept, though it was with gladness, when a way of escape from her tutelage was at length offered to her.

Louise de Valentinois was fourteen at the time of her mother's death. At the age of seventeen she became the wife of Louis de la Trémoille, a gallant gentleman, a knight without reproach. The daughter of Charlotte d'Albret was thus called to be the successor of the most celebrated of all the ladies of that illustrious House, Gabrielle de Bourbon-Montpensier, whose loss her husband had mourned for one year with passionate intensity, of which all the chroniclers of her time record that she was most worthy.

It cannot be doubted that it was the imperious summons of Madame d'Angoulême which at length drew the disconsolate widower from his retirement at his Château of Thouars. They had long been on the best of terms; she saw a way of offering him a consolation which would at the same time rid her of a troublesome charge, and that at a moment when her hands were full enough of state and sovereign affairs.

The noble bridegroom himself had probably seen Louise de Valentinois grow up from childhood under the loving and watchful care of a mother thanks to whom she was all d'Albret, and with whom, moreover, he had the honour to claim kinship in a double degree. His first wife's mother, Gabrielle de la Tour, was sister of Isabelle de la Tour, wife of Guillaume de Blois, maternal great-grandfather of Louise de Valentinois. Both Charlotte d'Albret,



THE OLD YEW AT LA MOTTE FEUILLY.  
From a photograph by Dagois, Iscoudun.



moreover, and her daughter's husband were related in the same degree to Marie de Sully, Dame de Sully, de Craon, d'Orval, and de Châteaumeillant.

The marriage would doubtless have met with the cordial approval of the young bride's mother. For the bride herself, choice, we may well believe, was not proffered, yet the bridegroom must have been good to look upon, even though no longer in his first youth, when he is described as having been "of middle height, not too tall, nor too short, well built, his head carried high, a lofty forehead, fine eyes, of a greenish hue, a short nose, a small mouth, a cleft chin, a clear, brown complexion, slightly tinged with pink, crisp hair, shining like fine gold." Some of this description, we may trust, still appertained to Louis de la Trémoille when he stood at the side of his girl-bride on their marriage-day, in April, 1517.

For himself, was it pity for her loneliness, the knowledge of how things were with her and Madame d'Angoulême, or, perhaps, the intolerable burden of his own solitariness, that made it easy for him to obey Louise de Savoie's wish? Of his second marriage, this, at least, and this only, Louis de la Trémoille is reputed to have said, when it was asked why he chose the daughter of Cesare Borgia to be his bride in the room of Gabrielle of the pure heart: "My choice has fallen upon Mademoiselle de Valentinois because she springs from a race whose women's virtue has never been called in question." It was, surely, of the House of d'Albret that he was thinking.

From household accounts, town's records, and other contemporary documents, we catch a few passing glimpses of the after-life of Louise de la Trémoille, "in her time," says Hilarion de Coste,

"a very noble and virtuous lady, heiress to the perfections as well as to the riches of her mother, whose manners and disposition," he adds, "she made her own; a lady, in short," the old chronicler concludes, "as chaste, virtuous, and gentle as her father was possessed, cruel, and wicked."

One such entry reminds us that Louise, too, kept her store of sweetmeats by her, though there was no little daughter of her first marriage to come dancing in with daybreak to rifle her drageoirs. Jean Mer-vault, Sieur du Pont, steward to the household at the Château de Thouars, sets down, in 1519, in his accounts, "Provision of salt fish, *confitures*, and *compôtes*, bought at La Rochelle for Louise de Valentinois, second wife of Louis de la Trémoille"; whilst among the noble ladies who attended Madame Claude of France, Queen of François I., to her coronation in 1517, we find the name of "La Dame de la Trémoille, issue de Navarre et d'Albret." Still, as the old French proverb has it, quoted by de Coste,

"La fille volontiers suit le train de sa mère."

By birth and rank, as by virtue (she is Borgia only by accident), she is her mother's child.

Memories of coincidence, had any been by to feel their thrill, peer again between the lines of Jacques Meance, the steward's, accounting, in the La Trémoille archives, for "10 crowns, paid by the Lord of Tal-mont and Thouars, to Jehan Billard, the sum in question having been borrowed from the said Billard when the lord lost playing against the Queen and Madame (his wife) at Romorantin, January 27, 1520"; at Romorantin—even there where we have seen the never-lifted veil fall for ever between Cesare Borgia and Charlotte d'Albret!

In the following year, Louise was left a childless widow by the death of her husband on the battlefield of Pavia. We have an allusion to the widowed Dame de Thouars in a document amongst those relating to the various religious Orders in the department of the Indre. The document in question relates to the giving of a verdict by the Court of Appeal of that day in a dispute between "Louise, Duchesse de Valentinois, Dame douairière de la Trémoille et de Bommiers," and the Minim monks of Bommiers, who claimed their ancient right to cut firewood in her forests of Bommiers. The case was decided in favour of the monks, and the bailiff of Berry, or his lieutenant, accompanied by a wood-merchant, was directed to make a personal inspection of the forests wherein the said "droit de chauffage" was claimed.

Bommiers, it may be mentioned in passing, had passed from the de Sully family by the marriage of Marie de Sully and Guy de la Trémoille. It was here that Louis de la Trémoille had spent his childhood, its vicinity to Linières, where the unhappy Jeanne de France had been brought up in the care of Anne de Culant, making the two children, it is said, early playmates. By a refinement of cruelty, King Louis XII. singled out this friend of her childhood to carry out the delicate mission of persuading his royal playfellow to consent to her repudiation by her faithless husband. The site of the Château de Bommiers was long used as a quarry by the people of the countryside.

By his will, dated October 1, 1522, the Sire d'Albret bequeathed to his granddaughter, the Dame de la Trémoille, the sum of 5,000 francs, in the following terms :

“Item, besides that which we gave to our late daughter, Charlotte d’Albret, during her lifetime Duchesse de Valentinois, by the formation of the dowry of her marriage, we give to our granddaughter, Louise de Valentinois, Dame de la Trémoille, her daughter, the sum of 5,000 francs.”

Louis de la Trémoille’s widow married as her second husband Philippe de Bourbon, Seigneur de Busset, eldest son of Pierre de Bourbon, known as the Bastard of Liège, the marriage taking place on February 3, 1530. Philippe, like his wife’s father and her first husband, fell in battle—in his case at Saint Quentin, August 10, 1577. La Motte Feuilly passed at his widow’s death to her second son, Jean de Bourbon, who married Eucharistie de la Brosse-Morlet, and died in the same year as his wife (1602). Both were interred in the church of La Motte Feuilly. By the marriage of their eldest daughter, Gilberte, Dame de La Motte Feuilly, where she was born in 1582, to Joachim de Chabannes, Seigneur de Trucy, the home of Charlotte d’Albret’s widowhood passed into the hands of strangers. Its after-fortunes may be gathered from the pages of M. Bonnaffé’s book, to which reference has been made more than once in this volume.

By her marriage with the Seigneur de Busset, Louise de Valentinois left six children—Henri (who died young, and was buried in the Church of the Minims of Bommiers), Claude, Jean (afterwards Seigneur de La Motte Feuilly), Jerome, Marguerite, and Catherine.

“It adds a sinister association to the title of Valentinois,” writes Mr. Theodore Cook in his “Old Touraine,” “that the most famous holder of it in recent times had been the handsome and unscrupulous Italian, Cesare Borgia.”

Rather, does it seem to us irony that verges on insult that the stately title which had been lifted in the person of Charlotte d'Albret to the heights of sainthood, should have devolved, within a few years of her death, on that cold and calculating royal favourite, siren of imperishable youth and beauty, châtelaine of Chenonceaux, "Diane Chasseresse of Goujon," that Diane de Poitiers whose father, Jean, Seigneur de Saint-Vallier, had lodged his protest against the bestowal of the duchy of Valentinois on the son of Rodrigo Borgia. In a document dated June 18, 1535, however, Louise de Bourbon-Busset, styling herself Duchesse de Valentinois and Comtesse de Diois, appears party to a transaction between herself and her cousin, Henri de Navarre, touching the "droits de légitime" (portion that a child has by law in his father's estate) of her mother, Charlotte d'Albret. The original is preserved amongst the archives of Pau.

In 1642 the title of Duc de Valentinois was conferred on Honoré de Grimaldi, Prince of Monaco.

## CHAPTER XXVII

Charlotte d'Albret's monument in the church of La Motte Feuilly—  
A daughter's tribute—Its sculptor—Its fate—Its restoration—  
As it is to-day—A last memory.

CHARLOTTE D'ALBRET was not destined to take her last repose in a nameless and inglorious tomb. On Tuesday, April 11, in the year 1521, Easter having but recently gone by, with its memories of the "sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to Life Eternal," and of the reunion of kindred hearts in the world to come, the high and mighty Lady, Madame Louise de la Trémoille, wife of the high and mighty Lord, Monseigneur Louis, Seigneur de la Trémoille, gave commission to a certain Maître Martin Claustre, a skilful "maker of images, of Grenoble, dwelling at Blois en Foye, in the parish of Saint Nicholas," to execute for her and to erect in the church of La Motte Feuilly a monument destined to be placed over the heart of the dead Duchess, and to be worthy of the filial love and ceaseless regret of which it was to be the memorial.

Claustre was an artist of more than local repute, whose work was much in demand amongst wealthy and illustrious patrons. Two years before the date on which the agreement was concluded between the sculptor and Louise de Valentinois, as she is styled in the document embodying it, Claustre had executed, to the order of Louis de la Trémoille, three tombs for

the chapel at Thouars—those, namely, of Louis I. de la Trémoille; his son, Jean, Cardinal-Archbishop of Auch; and his grandson, Charles, who fell at Marignano, the effigy of his wife, Louise de Coetivy, appearing on the last-named monument. A later work of Claustre was the tomb of the Baron de Montmorency, father of the more celebrated Constable.

The agreement between Louise de la Trémoille and Martin Claustre, which is preserved in the archives of the noble House of la Trémoille, furnishes us with the most minute description of one of “the most exquisite specimens of the art of the French Renaissance,” a description which is all the more valuable when we remember that, of all its glories, only a few mutilated fragments long remained.

Madame de la Trémoille's directions are most precise. The materials out of which Martin Claustre is to carve his masterpiece are to be of the finest marble and alabaster obtainable, fair and flawless, as befits the memory they are to enshrine and perpetuate. So much it is her right to demand. She is not the great lady only, patron of an artist whom she must exact from, in turn, an excellence which shall reflect credit alike on craftsmen and customer. She is a daughter who can conceive of nothing but the best being worthy to stand for the image of an idolised and adorable mother.

Three separate commissions are actually included in the bargain with Claustre, who fixes his fee for the whole at “500 *livres tournoises*.” The said sculptor is to make, first, a tomb three feet in height, the base to be of black marble. This is to be surrounded by pillars of the same, carved in the form of antique candelabra. Around the tomb (actually in niches,

on the walls of the chapel) statuettes of alabaster on pilasters of black marble are to represent the cardinal virtues, their seven names inscribed on as many scrolls, with a pilgrim's shell carved above the head of each figure.

Was it mere coincidence, we pause to ask, or some sly thrust of conscious irony, that inspired Martin Claustre, "maker of images," to repeat here, upon the tomb that hid a heart broken by Cesare Borgia, the selfsame symbolism borne upon his "Queen of Swords" ?

The black marble base supports a recumbent figure of the Duchesse de Valentinois, life-size, in simple yet stately robes, her head, with its ducal coronet, supported by two cushions, two little dogs couchant at her feet. Martin Claustre gave his chisel free play in the gracious fashioning of those softly falling folds that clothe the marble as in life, in the long girdle that holds those folds in place, in the chaplet held between the loosely clasped hands. A statue of Nôtre Dame of Loretto, with a shrine, both in alabaster, and placed against the wall of the chapel, completed the memorial at La Motte Feuilly. When completed, it was placed, says the historian of the Château, Pierquin de Gembloux, in a chapel expressly erected outside the church and connected with it by a large semi-circular opening with two exits, one to the chancel of the church, and the other to the outer world. By direction of Louise de la Trémoille, a fireplace was built in the chapel, so that even in winter she could come to pray beside that venerated shrine.

Further, for the Chapel of the Annonciades at Bourges, Claustre was to execute a slab of white marble of Dauphiny, bearing an effigy of the Duchess,

with an inscription, to be placed in the choir of the church.

Unhappily for those who should come in quest of it in after years, this masterpiece of Martin Claustre was not destined to survive the pitiless horrors of the French Revolution. It was too beautiful, too consecrated, to be spared, when so much that was akin to it perished in that wild upheaval. In the year of terror, 1793, this exquisite monument of filial homage to a mother who deserved all this, and a thousandfold more, of her adored and adoring child, was mercilessly mutilated by three impious iconoclasts, whose names go down to everlasting execration—Lesueur and Plessa of La Châtre, and de Tabaud of Sainte-Sévère. Broken fragments of the marble pillars, a few shapeless bits of stone that were once the lovely presentments of the cardinal virtues that rejoiced to guard so fair a tomb, these alone remained, when the storm had swept by, to mark the spot where the broken heart of the “most high and mighty Dame Charlotte d’Albret, in her lifetime widow of the most high and mighty Prince, Dom Cesare, Duc de Valentinois, Comte de Diois, Lord of Issoudun, and of La Motte Feuilly,” lay at rest.

No attempt seems to have been made for many years to repair the wrong and outrage inflicted on that poor heart whose griefs might well have turned aside the uplifted arm of the fanatical revolutionaries. Thrust, upright, into a corner of the sacristy of the church, recumbent no more, it was as though fate forbade her, even in her marble semblance, to take her well-earned, last repose unbroken to the end. She had been rudely summoned—so the fancy seemed to come to those who saw her standing there, bruised and buffeted, even as the

heart of her once was in life—to meet one more shock of fate, one more cruel alarm.

Yet, the face that had been so cruelly battered and beaten out of all recognition seemed to smile through that piteous rain of blows ; the noble head carried itself no less nobly for the stripping of its ducal crown. Still the beautiful hands, loosely clasped together, told the beads of hours long gone by. The veil seems to lift for us as we gaze, and gaze, and through a mist we see her as she was, her cruel scars smoothed out by a tenderer and more skilful chisel than that of Martin Claustre, the smiling mouth, the wistful eyes, and, seen once more as Louise de la Trémoille saw her, when she came to stand, at All Saints', 1521, beside the finished tomb, we know that he who carved our Charlotte knew her well.

For the woman, as our longing and our vision give her back to us for a little space, is the woman as we know her to have been—the sweet, simple nature, which knew how to give itself to the uttermost—alas ! that it should have been to such infamy—strong to be faithful, but not strong enough to forget. From the marble effigy the old shocks of grief and disaster and dereliction have fallen back, as waves from a rock which breasts their fierceness. Memory of grief outlived, indeed, is here, but the bitterness of its burden is overpast. With all that serenity, learnt long ago in her tutelage at the court of Anne de Bretagne, with all that “great patience” which is the “added honour” of a “constant woman,” she looks, with deathless hope, across the centuries, content to have paid, with a lifetime of dereliction, for the brief idyll of Blois and Romorantin. And still, though all the splendours of her tomb crumble into shapeless fragments at her feet, the very mutilated

stones cry out her virtues in the dust, though of the recording medallions only two survive, Temperance and Strength—strange graces to adorn the name of Borgia!

On the floor of the nave of the church of La Motte Feuilly the following inscription may still be traced, though not without some difficulty:

"OY GIST LE CŒUR DE TS. HAULTE ET TS. PUISSANT  
DAME, MADAME CHARLOTTE D'ALBRET, EN SON VIVAT  
VEUVE DE TS. HAULT ET . . . PRINCE D'OMP CESAR D . . . DUC  
DE VALENTINOIS, COMTE DE DIOIS, SEIGNEUR DISSOULDUN  
ET DE LA MOTTE DE FEULLY, LAQUELLE TRESPASSA A  
SON LIEU DE LA MOTTE . . . DU MOIS DE MAR, L'AN DE  
GRACE MIL CINQ CENS QUATORZE."

"Here lies the heart of the most high and mighty Dame, Madame Charlotte d'Albret, in her lifetime widow of the most high and mighty prince Dom Cesare de Borgia, Duc de Valentinois, Comte de Diois, Seigneur d'Issoudun and of La Motte Feuilly, in which place she departed this life in the month of March, in the year of grace, 1514."

### ENVOI

Though the statue of Charlotte d'Albret has, happily, been replaced, recumbent, on her restored monument in the church of La Motte Feuilly, I know of no more fitting words than those of M. Edmond Planchut with which to bring to a close this brief memoir of one who was a shadow amid the stir and splendour of her epoch:

"The mutilated alabaster," he wrote, four-and-twenty years ago, "has only taken to itself, with the passage of the centuries, a tinge of deeper warmth, which can scarcely be said to tarnish its brilliancy. Much has gone from the noble beauty of the tomb. The marble throat still bears the cruel trace of the

gash that severed the head of the statue from the body ; the face, disfigured as it is by a senseless rain of blows from a wanton hammer, is unrecognisable ; the ducal crown has been despoiled of its fleurons ; yet the ruin still breathes the spirit of the utmost dignity, of the most majestic resignation. The Duchesse de Valentinois, with her braided hair framing her disfigured face, her beautiful hands meekly folded, her long court mantle and flowing robe, clasped at the waist by the long girdle worn by the noble ladies of her day, seems thus to be awaiting the hour that shall make amends."

## APPENDIX I

THE MARRIAGE CONTRACT BETWEEN CESARE BORGIA,  
DUC DE VALENTINOIS AND DE DIOIS, AND CHAR-  
LOTTE D'ALBRET, SIGNED AT THE CHÂTEAU OF  
BLOIS, MAY 10, 1499.

A TOUS ceux qui ces présentes lettres verront, Denis Audoulx, licencié en loys, conseiller du Roy, notre Sire, juge ordinaire, & garde de la prévosté & ressort d'Issouldun pour ledit seigneur, Salut. Sçavoir faisons que aujourd'hui, datte de ces présentes, nous avons tenu, veu & leu, de mot à mot, certaines lettres escriptes en parchemin scellées en double queue & cire verte, non suspectes, vicieuses, ne cancellées, ains font saines & entières en seings, scel, datte & esriture, comme il nous est apparu de prime face & desquelles lettres la teneur s'enfuit : A tous quy ces présentes lettres verront, Guillaume Blondet, licencié en loix, bailly de Blois, pour Messieurs les doyens & Chapitre de Saint-Sauveur de Bloys et en la justice qu'ils ont en la ville & banlieue dudit lieu durant les trois jours d'après l'Ascension Notre Sire, Salut. Sçavoir faisons que par devant Jacques Perault & Gilles Regent, tabellions jurez duscel éably aux contrats dudit bailliage, & en la présence du Roi & de la Roine & par leur commandement, Monsieur le Chancelier a dit & proposé devant plusieurs grands et notables personnages que ledit seigneur, deuement adverty des grands & recommandables services que haut & puissant prince Domp Caesar de Bourga, duc de Valentinois & Comte de Diois, a faict à luy & à sa couronne & qu'il espère que ledit Duc, ses parens, amis & alliés

luy fairoient au temps advenir, & mesmement touchant la quonqueste de ses Royaume de Naples & Duchié de Millan, & aussi pour les grands biens & vertus que ledit Sieur cognoit être en la personne dudit Duc, & singulièrement désire le retirer & faire venir en ce royaume & en iceluy le hériter, ce qu'il a faict, desdits duchié de Valentinois, comté de Diois & autres terres & seigneuries & avecques ce ont lesdits sieur & dame affecté le marier à quelque bon & vertueux personnage en ce Roiaume : pourquoy considérans les louables & recommandables biens & vertus quy sont en la personne de Mademoiselle Charlotte d'Albret, fille naturelle & légitime de haut & puissant prince, Monseigneur d'Albret, leur prochaine parente, & que meilleur personnage ne de plus grande maison ne le pourroit allier par deça, ont envoyé par devers très hauts et très excellents Princes les Roy & Roine de Navarre, duquel Roy ladite damoiselle est sœur germaine, & par devers ledit sieur d'Albret pour leur remonstrer & prier qu'ils voulussent entendre & consentir audit mariage, & que en ce faisant ils réputeroient très grand plaisir & service par eux leur avoir été faicts, lesquels Roy & Royne de Navarre, & sieur d'Albret à (cette fin) ont envoyé aucuns de leurs serviteurs par devers lesdits sieur & dame pour plus amplement sçavoir de leur vouloir & intention, & pour en ce leur obéyr & complaire, avecques lesquels aucuns grands personnages des plus spéciaux serviteurs desdits sieur & dame, & par eux quand à ces députés, ont conféré de ladite matière & finalement en iceluy traicté tellement a été besogné, que après que les serviteurs desdits Roy & Royne de Navarre & sieur d'Albret ont sceu & congneu la grande affection & vouloir que lesdits sieur & dame avoient & ont en ladite matière & pour leur obéir & complaire, & aussy pour les grands biens & vertus qu'ils ont congneu être en la personne de mon dit sieur le Duc, ont ce jourdhuy en leur présence accordé ledit mariage en la forme & manière qu'il est plus à plain contenu en certains articles

illecques leus de mot à mot, desquels la teneur sensuit : Au traicté de mariage, quy se fera si à Dieu plait, de haut & puissant prince Domp Cesar de Borsa, duc de Valentinois & comte de Diois, & de damoiselle Charlotte d'Albret, fille de haut & puissant prince Messire Alain Sieur d'Albret, ont été traicté, conclu & accordez les points, convenants & articles que s'ensuivent : Premièrement, que mondit sieur le Duc épousera le plutot que bonnement faire se pourra ladite damoiselle. Item que en faveur & contemplation dudit mariage mondit sieur d'Albret a donné & constitué en dot & mariage à ladite damoiselle sa fille naturelle & légitime, la somme de trente mille *livres tournois*, en ce comprins les part & portion & légat que ladite damoiselle pourroit avoir & demander de & sur les biens de feu Madame Françoise de Bretagne, sa mère, laquelle somme sera la vray dot & patrimoine dicelle damoiselle, & la leur paiera aux termes & en la manière que s'ensuit, c'est à sçavoir dedans huict mois après la célébration dudit mariage six mille livres, & le surplus de ladite somme, mille cinq cens livres par an jusques à fin de payement de ladite somme, & moyennant icelle somme ladite damoiselle a renoncé & renonce à tous droits & successions qu'elle pourroit cy après ou de présent quereler ou demander les biens & successions de mondit sieur d'Albret & de ladite feu dame sa mère. Item feront lesdits (futurs époux) par moitié en meubles & acquets dès le jour de leurs nocces, & au cas que mondit sieur le Duc voyse de vie à trépas avant ladite damoiselle, icelle damoiselle aura pour son donaire, sa vie durant, quatre mille livres de rente de prochain en prochain, où bon luy semblera, & laquelle des maisons de mondit sieur le Duc qu'elle voudra choisir & élire. Item sy mondit sieur le Duc va de vie à trépas avant ladite damoiselle & délaisse enfans de leur dit mariage qui soient mineurs & en bas age, icelle damoiselle aura l'administration de leur corps & biens & faire les fruits de leurs biens & héritages jusques à ce que lesdits enfans

soient en âge compétent, & en les alimentant & nourrissant selon leur état, & ce oultre & par dessus les donaire, meubles & conquets dessusdits. Item est traicté & accordé que le premier fils quy sortira de ce mariage habille à succéder en faveur d'aïnesse, & pour l'entretènement des principautés & seigneuries dudit Duc, sera & demeurera seigneur & héritier universel de tous les biens, seigneuries, & chevances dudit Duc, réservé aux autres fils & filles, si aucuns en y a, leur légitime part & portion, telle que le droit ou par les coutumes du pays où lesdits biens seront assis leur devra appartenir & compéter. Item & au cas qu'il n'y ayt que filles, est traicté & accordé que la première fille, si elle est habille à succéder, sera seule dame & héritière de tous les biens du dit Duc, réservé aux autres leur légitime pour leur part & portion telle que de droit ou par les coutumes des pays leur devra appartenir, comme dessus est dit, & en outre, a été traicté & accordé entre lesdites parties que ladite damoiselle pourra tester ou disposer à son bon plaisir de ses biens, soit du dot à elle constitué par ledit sieur d'Albret son père, ou de ses bagues & joyaux & autres ses biens, meubles & immeubles. Item & en faveur & contemplation dudit mariage le roy a accordé audit sieur Duc que s'il veut avoir & prendre récompense & échange de six mille livres qu'il luy a données sur le tirage du Rosne, il les luy baillera en terres & seigneuries en la duchié de Guienne ou autre part, à la volonté de mondit sieur le Duc : & ce faict, ont lesdits Monsieur le Duc, Dom Cesar de Borsa d'une part, ma dite damoiselle Charlotte d'Albret d'autre, & haut & puissant sieur Messire Gabriel d'Albret, chevalier, sieur d'Avesnes, fils de mondit sieur d'Albret, Messire Regnault de Saint Chamont, aussi chevalier, sieur de Lissat, & maître Jean de Calvimont, licencié en loix, sieur de Tursac, au nom & comme procureurs suffisamment fondés de lettres de procuration pour mondit sieur d'Albret, ainsy qu'ilz ont faict apparoir par lettres de procuration expresses

au cas, inférées vers la fin de ces présentes, d'une autre part pour ce personnellement établis par devant lesdits jurez tabellions, cogneu & confessé les choses dessusdites être vrayes, et qu'ils ont faict & font entre eux les traités, accords & convenances que dessus, selon, par la forme & manière cy dessus déclarée, tout sy comme les parties disoient & promettoient icelles par la foy & serment de leurs corps esdits noms l'une partie à l'autre chascune partie endroit foy, qu'ils ne viendront dorénavant ne laisseront à venir par autres contre les traictés, accords, dons, promesses, consentement & choses dessusdites, ne contre aucune dicelles, ainçois les tiendront, garderont, entretiendront, accompliront & auront fermes & étables & agréables à tousjours, mais chascune partie en droit foy, tout ainsy & par la forme & manière que cy dessus sont dites & divisées, sans aucunement les rappeler ne venir contre, & sy par aucune manière il advenoit que lesdites parties & leurs hoirs eussent ou soubtinssent aucuns dommages ou intérêts, ou faisants couts, frays, mises ou despance, l'une partie par le faict & coulpe de l'autre en deffaut ou par deffaut d'accomplir les choses susdites & chacune dicelle, ainsy & par la forme & manière que cy dessus sont dites & divisées, la partie, par quelque coulpe & deffaut lesdits dommages seroient sours & advenus, les a promis & promets par sa foy en la main desdits jures, esdits noms, payer & rendre entièrement à la partie endomagée, à son simple serment ou du porteur de ses lettres, sans aucune preuve faire, & quand à toutes les choses dessusdites & chascune d'icelles faire, parfaire, tenir, garder, entretenir, & accomplir de point en point fermement & loyaument, sy comme dessus sont dites & divisées, & de n'en venir & faire encontre, lesdites parties, esdits noms, chascune partie en droit foy, pourtant que à un chascun d'eux touche & peut toucher, ont obligé & encore obligent l'une partie à l'autre & leurs hoirs & ayant cause d'eux, et soumirent à la juridiction de nostre Cour de Blois & à toutes

autres, eux & leurs hoirs & tous biens meubles & immeubles présens & advenir, renonçant par leur dite foy, quand à ce, à tous privilèges, graces & bénéfices donnés & à donner, impétrés ou à impêtrer, à exception de tricherie, fraude, barat, malice, lésion & circonvension, à tout droit escript & non escript à tous (us), coutumes, & establissemens de pays & lieux contraires à ce faict, à exception de déception, de juste prix, & toutes autres déceptions & exceptions quelconques. S'ensuit la teneur desdites lettres de procuration. Alain sire d'Albret, comte de Dreux, de Gaure, de Penthievre, de Perigort, viscomte de Tartas & de Limoges, sieur d'Avesnes, à tous ceux qui ces présentes lettres verront, sçavoir faisons que pour l'entière confiance que avons les personnes de nostre très cher & aîné fils Gabriel d'Albret & de Messire Regnault de Saint Chamans, chevalier, seigneur de Lissac & de Pazols, seneschal des Lannes, & de maître Jean de Calvimont, licencié en loix, sieur de Tursac, notre conseiller, iceux faisons, créons, constituons, & ordonnons par ces mêmes présentes noz expres & spéciaux procureurs & messagers pour traicter & accorder & conclure le mariage pourparlé par le Roy. entre le duc de Valentinois & notre fille Charlotte d'Albret, & le traicté diceluy, ensemble toutes autres choses touchans & concernans ledit mariage ausquels nous dits procureurs donnons pouvoir, puissance d'y faire, procurer, traicter & conclure tout ainsi & par la forme & manière que nous faisons & faire pourrons, sy présens & en personne y étions, jaçoit qu'il y eut aucun cas ou chose réquerant plus expres ou madement spécial; & promettons tenir & avoir agréable, ferme & stable tout ce que par eux y aura été faict, négocié et besongné & accordé, & autres choses qu'ils verront & leur semblera être nécessaire & convenable pour la sûreté dudit mariage, & que nous n'y faisons aucune chose à ce contraire, & ce sous obligation de nos biens; & pour sûreté de cesdites présentes nous les avons signées de notre main & fait sceller du

scel de nos armes à Casteljaloux, le vingt & troisième jour de mars l'an mil quatre cens quatre vingt dix & neuf. Et ainsy signé : Alain & audessous Roguet, & scellé des armes dudit sieur d'Albret de cire rouge sur simple queue. Ce fut faict & passé au château de Blois es présences de très révérend père en Dieu, monseigneur Georges, cardinal d'Amboise, mondit sieur le chancelier, monsieur l'archevêque de Sens, messieurs de Némours & d'Orval, les évêques de Bayeux, & de Cette, de Malfi & de Viviers, le sieur de Tournon, & le vice-chancelier de Bretagne ; en témoin de laquelle chose, nous bailli de Blois dessusdit, à la relation desdits jurés, avons faict sceller ces présentes lettres du scel aux contrats dudit bailliage le dixième jour de may l'an de grâce mil quatre cens quatre vingts dix neuf ; ainsi signé Perrault & Régent.

## APPENDIX II

THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF CHARLOTTE  
D'ALBRET, DUCHESSE DE VALENTINOIS  
*Dated March 11, 1513 (1514)*

That is to say (Doat MSS., Vol. 229, fol. 229) 1514, the year commencing at Easter, which in that year fell on March 27.

A TOUS ceux qui ces présentes lettres verront, Germain Colhadon, licentié en Loys, garde du scel établi aux contracts de la prévosté & Chastellenie de Lamothe de Feully, pour très haute & puissante dame & princesse madame Charlotte d'Albret, duchesse de Valentinois, comtesse de Dioys, dame d'Issouldum, de Nerez & dudit lieu de Lamothe, Salut : Sçavoir faisons que présens Messire André Richomme, prêtre, & Martin Amison, clercs, jurez & notaires dudit scel, usans de notre autorité & pouvoir quand à ce, en lieu de nous, a été, pour présente madite dame Charlotte d'Albret, laquelle a aujourd'huy date de ces présentes, fait son testament & ordonnance de dernière volonté, en la présence desdits jurez & témoins cy après nommez, en la forme & manière qui s'enfuit.

Premièrement a donné son âme à Dieu & l'a recommandée à la Vierge Marie & à monsieur Saint Michel l'Ange, qu'ils soient envers Notre Seigneur Jésus Christ ses intercesseurs, & a ordonné que son corps soit ensepulturé au lieu & monastère de Notre Dame la Nonciade à Bourges, que a fondé feue madame la duchesse de Berri, & que son dit corps soit porté là par l'ordonnance de tous ses gentilshommes qui la servoient tant qu'elle

a vécu, & par deux si les autres ne si peuvent trouver, lesquels elle faict tous ses exécuteurs afin qu'ils advisent à son dict enterrement, sa quarantaine, trentaine, annuel, & bout de l'an, & aumone, & bien faict que ladite dame devra donner à la dicte Noncyade qui est de fonder à perpétuité une messe à diacre & à soubdiacre que de présent disent les chanoines de Saint Sire d'Issoudun en la forme qu'ils la disent, & fondée de cent livres tournois de rente ou de mils francs une fois payés, & veut que lesdits chanoines disent ladite messe jusqu'à la Saint Jean seulement, & que ne soient payés jusque-là. Item ordonne ladite dame que douze vingts livres tournoises soient baillées par une fois, ou que de rente dudit argent soit achetée par les dits exécuteurs afin de fonder en perpétuité le service tel qu'elle l'a voulu & se dit à présent aux religieux de Notre Dame d'Issoudun. Item veut ladite dame que tous ses ornements d'église qu'elle a soient baillés au couvent où elle sera enterrée, hormis quelques-uns pour servir à la chapelle de mademoiselle sa fille, & aussi ordonne que le satin blanc qu'elle a en ses coffres soit baillez au couvent des cordeliers d'Issoudun, & que trente francs leur soient baillés par une fois par l'ordonnement de ses dits exécuteurs. Item ordonne la dite dame que ma dite damoiselle sa fille soit menée à madame d'Angoulême, & livrés tous ses biens afin de les bien garder à sadite fille en bonne sûreté, laquelle elle fait sa seule & universelle héritière, ordonnant aussi la dite dame que la gouvernante de sa dite fille, mademoiselle de Toutvent, demeure avec elle pour la servir, & lui donne cinquante livres tournoises de gages, & aussi que la nièce de ladite damoiselle de Toutvent demeure avec la dite damoiselle sa fille ; elle veut que tous ses dettes soient payées par l'avis & ordonnance de ses dits exécuteurs, quel part qu'ils soient connues tant de la Tampine que de Jeanneton sa lavandière, & que au cordelier qui prêcha les advents derniers devant elle soit donné quatre écus. Item ordonne ladite dame que sur

tous ses biens soient baillés à Marie de Lavoyne trois cent livres tournois pour une fois payés. Item donne madite dame à ses filles & femmes servantes tous & chacuns ses habillements, & veut qu'ils soient départis par ses dits exécuteurs. Item veut ladite dame que le testament de sa tante de Montrésor soit accompli pour sa part. Item & pour ce que Antoine Amignon, écuyer, seigneur de Thary, s'est mêlé par son ordonnance & comme son procureur des affaires & successions de feu Madame de Montrésor, sa tante, dont il n'a rendu compte, veut que en son serment fait devant sesdits exécuteurs soit cru, & que par les dits exécuteurs lui soit donné quittance que lui vaille, pour sa décharge, & pareillement de ce que aura fait maître Robert Challopin en rendant compte à ses dits exécuteurs veut comme dessus, & de Yvonet Louargan, son valet de chambre, & que maître Robert, son aumônier, soit au service de sa fille aux gages de cinquante livres tournoises pour an : & que monsieur de Maray donne de l'argent qu'il a neuf aunes de velous à Chanay, & se recommande bien humblement à madame d'Angoulême & lui recommande sa fille. Elle donne la maison qui était à feu messire Denis Nerez à Petit Jean le fourrier, & à sa femme s'il était trouvé qu'elle soit à elle. Item veut ladite dame que les comptes de Pierre Regnard sieur de Maray soient rendus devant ses autres exécuteurs, & que par eux soient arrêtés, & que après si besoin est par lesdits exécuteurs lui soit donné quittance que lui serve. Item ordonne ladite dame que cent livres tournoises soient baillées à Antoine Amignon & à François une fois payées pour ce qu'ils l'ont servies quelques temps à leurs dépenses & que tous ses serviteurs soient payés de tout le temps passé jusqu'à l'heure de la ronture de sa maison, & que son cœur & entrailles soient mises dedans l'église de La Motte, & donne une aumône telle que ses exécuteurs ordonneront. Si comme lesdits jurés & notaires auxquels nous croyons fermement & ajoutons plénière foi nous ont rapporté

avoir été présents, & par madite dame appelez pour voir par elle ordonner les choses dessusdites, & avoir ainsi été faites & ordonnées par madite dame en leurs présences, au rapport desquels & en témoin de ce & de vérité ledit scel que nous gardons avons mis & apposé à ces présentes : fait & donné le onzième jour de mars l'an mil cinq cent & treize, présens à ce honorable homme & sage maître Sebastien Coppain, licencié en médecine, & Germain Bourdeau, témoins évequés & appelés.

### APPENDIX III

FRAGMENT OF THE MARRIAGE CONTRACT OF LOUISE DE  
VALENTINOIS AND LOUIS II. DE LA TRÉMOILLE,  
SOLEMNISED APRIL 17, 1517.

BEFORE François Bastonneau and Jean Contesse, notaries . . . at the Chatelet of Paris, in the presence . . . very noble damoiselle Louise de Borgia, daughter of the late M. the Duc de Valentinois and of the late Dame Charlotte d'Albret . . . and the most noble and most mighty lord M. Louis de La Trémoille, Vicomte de Thouars . . . were enumerated and reputed the property and inheritance of the said damoiselle and of her heirs in the sum of 81,730 *livres tournois* . . . according to the inventory taken of the goods of the said damoiselle . . . exclusive of the precious stones . . . and the robes, linen, beds, tapestry, furs, and other utensils which shall be in common between the said future husband and wife. . . . And as for the said precious stones contained in the said inventory, they shall remain the property of the said damoiselle and in her custody. And in the event of the said Milord de La Trémoille desiring to take and sell them, which he may do, should it seem good to him, two-thirds of the proceeds of the sale shall be the property of the said damoiselle and her heirs, and the third part shall be in common between the future husband and wife. Given at the place of St. Maur des Fosses in the year 1517, Friday the 17th day of the month of April after Easter.

## INDEX

AGNUS DEI, 36, 248

Albret, Alain, Sire d', 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 38, 39, 40, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 53, 56, 58, 59, 73, 74, 90, 91, 92, 93, 120, 121, 127, 129, 130, 131, 133, 134, 135, 137, 140, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 152, 253, 263, 265, 306, 325

—, Amanieu d', 19, 25, 38, 135, 136, 216

—, Anne d', 25, 26

—, Bernard-Esi d', 19

—, Charles, 18, 21, 22

—, Charlotte d', afterwards Duchesse de Valentinois, her ancestry, 17-21; her grandfather, 20; her mother's family, 21-22; marriage of her parents, 22-23; her birthplace, 24-25; her brothers and sisters, 25-26; her childhood, 28; glimpses of her nursery, 28-29; her father and his falcons, 29-30; his costumes; her mother's dresses, furs, head-dresses, jewels, and linen-closet, 31-37; pictures of her childhood, 37; death of her mother, 38; her father's lawsuits, 39-40; her motherless girlhood, 40-43; her sisters as regents at Casteljaloux, 44-45; date of her appearance at the French Court, 58; marriages in her family, 59; the court of Anne de Bretagne, 60-61; her companions at court, and their tasks, 62-63; the Borgia shadow on her life, 67; her environment at court, 83 *seq.*; her beauty, 92; her marriage begins to be matter of concern at Paris, 93; her fate in question, 97; its slow approach, 100; the coming of her fairy prince, 115 *seq.*; her marriage

still discussed, 120 *seq.*; fortunate obstinacy of the other Charlotte, 127; her father bargains, 128 *seq.*; contrast with Lucrezia Borgia, 131-132; her father's proxies empowered to arrange her marriage, 133; haggling over her dowry, 134-135; her brother Amanieu made Cardinal, 135 *seq.*; her arrival awaited at Blois, 136 *seq.*; her chaperone, 138; her marriage contract, 139 *seq.*; her marriage solemnised at the Château of Blois, 149-150; her bridal dress, 150-151; portraits of Cesare Borgia, 152 *seq.*; her bridal gifts, 156 *seq.*; her letter to the Pope, 159; her husband invested with the Order of St. Michael, 162 *seq.*; her marriage ridiculed by the students of Paris, 165-166; her honeymoon, 166; Cesare's separate dreams, 167-168; Lady of Issoudun, 170 *seq.*; at Romorantin, 174 *seq.*; her farewell to Cesare, 179-180; her vision of the Golden Rose, 180 *seq.*; her desertion by Cesare, 192 *seq.*; the place she might have filled in Italy, 194 *seq.*; her journey to Italy provided for by the Pope, 198; opposition to the project, 198 *seq.*; birth of her child, Louise, 200; takes up her residence at Issoudun, *ibid.*; a present from Cesare of Venetian delicacies, 200 *seq.*; present at the reception of the Archduke and Archduchess of Austria (Philip and Jeanne, afterwards La Folle), 205 *seq.*; bearer of sweetmeats, 212; her journey again on the tapis, 216; her illness prevents

her undertaking it, 216; theory of her reaching Naples, and turned back by order of the Cesare, 219; Issoudun of her day, 220 *seq.*; attitude of her relatives, 221; of Anne de Bretagne, *ibid.*; Anne commended by the Pope for her graciousness to his daughter-in-law, 221-222; at the second coronation of Anne de Bretagne, 222 *seq.*; her residence of La Motte Feuilly, 226 *seq.*; news from Rome through her brother, 230 *seq.*; her husband's captivity, 234; her life at La Motte Feuilly, 237 *seq.*; furnishing of her Château, 239 *seq.*; treasures and trinkets in her apartments, 242 *seq.*; her head-dresses, 244; shadow of her husband on her Inventory, 245; her pomanders and perfumes, 246 *seq.*; her Agnus Dei, 248; her furs, 251-252; her unmade robes, 252; Simon de la Romagière writes of her loneliness to the Sire d'Albret, 253; as châtelaine and housemistress, 253 *seq.*; as needlewoman and housewife, 258; her kitchen, 259-260; her bakery, 260; her outdoor servants, *ibid.*; her butler and cellarer, *ibid.*; her chapel ornaments, 261, 263; her business papers, 263 *seq.*; her husband's letter missing from her Inventory, 266-269; her friendship with Sainte Jeanne de Valois, 270 *seq.*; her confessor, Père Nicolas, 277; at the funeral of Sainte Jeanne de Valois, 278; her husband escapes from La Mota, 280; he claims her dowry, 281; Requesenz, major-domo of Cesare Borgia, seeks her co-operation in his mission to Louis XII., 283; wife and friend fail, 284 *seq.*; death of her husband, 289-290; her grief, 291 *seq.*; the likeness of their last destinies, 295 *seq.*; La Motte Feuilly and its mistress in mourning, 296 *seq.*; purchases the demesne of Chalus from Marie de Vermandois, 299; her last will and testament, 300; her death-bed,

300 *seq.*; her bequests, 301-302; time avenges her fate, 305 *seq.*; after-life of her child, 308 *seq.*; her wardship, 315 *seq.*; monument to her mother's memory, its artist, her tomb restored, 328 *seq.*  
 Albret, François d', 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 28, 31, 32, 35, 36, 38, 39, 134, 143, 243, 248, 251  
 —, Gabriel d', 25, 57, 133, 145, 147  
 —, House of, 17  
 —, Jean d', 25, 59, 73, 281, 291, 298  
 —, Perducas d', 19  
 —, Pierre d', 25  
 Alexander VI., Pope, 66, 67, 72, 89, 94, 98, 100, 121, 127, 136, 159, 162, 164, 165, 166, 180, 182, 183, 184, 194, 197, 198, 218, 221, 222, 233, 248  
 Altamura, Federigo of, 85  
 Altar, portable, 149, 150  
 Amboise, Georges d', 116, 120, 129, 148, 149, 150, 206, 218, 306  
 Anne de Bretagne, 31, 41, 42, 43, 45-49, 53, 55, 56, 58-63, 73, 75-84, 86, 92, 94, 95-98, 122, 125, 129-130, 133, 136-137, 149, 156, 162, 174-175, 190, 199, 206, 208, 210, 211, 212, 215, 216, 221, 222, 223, 225, 270, 272, 275, 283  
 — de Candale, 75, 127, 207, 208, 212, 216  
 — d'Orval, 257  
 Armagnac, Charles d', 40  
 Avesnes, Gabriel d'Albret, Seigneur d', 25, 57, 133, 145, 147  
 Bahut, the, 117, 118, 242  
 Bajazet, 29  
 Beaune, Jacques de, 63, 80, 129, 134, 265  
 Biberons, 305  
 Billiard-table, 256  
 Blois, the Château of, 136, 137, 138, 139, 147, 148, 149, 166, 167, 168, 170, 174, 205, 206  
 Bonnaiffé, M. Edmond, quoted, 114, 157, 158, 166, 238, 240, 242, 243, 245, 255, 310  
 Borgia, Cesare, afterwards Duc de Valentinois, his birth and parentage, 67; his boyhood, bishoprics, and Cardinalate, 68; love of pageantry, 71; crowns Federigo of Naples as Papal Legate, 86; renunciation of the

Cardinal's Hat, 89; the Pope concerned with his marriage, 94; invested with the duchy of Valentinois and the county of Diois, 96; preparations for his voyage to France, his outfit and suite, 98 *seq.*; the Pope's letter of commendation to the French King, 100; departure from Rome, 101; preparations for his reception at Avignon, 101 *seq.*; arrival at Marseilles, and visits to places of interest, 103; entry into Avignon, 103 *seq.*; fêtes, gifts, dances, and banquets, 104 *seq.*; departure from Avignon, 113; arrival at Chinon, 114 *seq.*; a famous procession, 116 *seq.*; the fashion of his dress, 119; invests Georges d'Amboise with the Red Hat, 120; his matrimonial negotiations, 120 *seq.*; the Princesse de Tarente rejects his suit, 121 *seq.*; Charlotte d'Albret proposed as his bride, 127 *seq.*; plot and counter-plot regarding the marriage, 130 *seq.*; the Sire d'Albret as prudent parent, 135; marriage contract at Blois, 139 *seq.*; marriage solemnised at Blois, 149 *seq.*; his rôle as bridegroom, 151 *seq.*; varying verdicts of history, 153 *seq.*; princely gifts to his bride, 156 *seq.*; letter to the Pope, 161; Knight of St. Michael, 162 *seq.*; Son of France, 164; the students of Paris ridicule his marriage, 165 *seq.*; the Pope awaits the coming of the French expedition into Italy, 166; days at Blois, 167-168; illness at Issoudun, 169; days at Issoudun with his wife, 170 *seq.*; last days with his wife at Romorantin, 174 *seq.*; their last farewell, 176-179; entry into Milan, 180; investiture with the Golden Rose, 180-182; the Borgia dream of the Double Crown and its sinister influence on the fate of the House of Aragon, 183 *seq.*; his Italian campaign, 192 *seq.*; rumour that his wife is detained in France as a pledge of his good faith with Louis XII., 198 *seq.*; sends Venetian sweet-

meats to his wife, 200 *seq.*; political fruits of his sister Lucrezia's marriage to the Duke of Ferrara, 217; murder of Julius Caesar of Varano and his sons, 218; his French alliance in danger, *ibid.*; Cardinal d'Amboise a useful ally, *ibid.*; fresh favours from the French King, 219; the massacre of Sinigaglia, *ibid.*; his wife said to have reached Naples and to have been turned back by his orders, *ibid.*; "eternally grateful" to Anne de Bretagne for her kindness to the Duchess, 221 *seq.*; narrowly escapes death by poison, which proves fatal to his father, 230, 233; imprisonment and convalescence, 233, 234; sent prisoner to Spain, 234; his shadow on his wife's Inventory, 245; no correspondence with his wife extant, 266, 269; escapes from La Mota, 280; in need of money, *ibid.*; claims his wife's dowry, 281; mission of Requesenz to Louis XII., 282; failure of the mission, 287; deprived of the lordship of Issoudun by the French King, 287; resolves to be revenged on the Pope and the French King, 288; determined to place his sword at the disposal of Maximilian, 289; drawn into an ambuscade at Viana, 290; his death, *ibid.*; his epitaphs, 293 *seq.*; fate of his tomb, 296; the doom of the Borgia policy, 306 *seq.*  
 Borgia, Lucrezia, 60, 67, 71-72, 131, 132, 155, 197, 203-204, 217, 291, 318  
 Bourbon, Louis de, 138, 264, 265, 236  
 —, Louise de, 138, 230  
 —, Bussat de, 326  
 Bources, Baudet des, 254, 297  
 Bourges, 8, 126, 167, 171, 200, 230, 257, 271, 273, 274-278, 282-283, 287-288, 295, 302  
 Brantôme, quoted, 53, 58, 61, 62, 80, 115, 116, 118  
 —, Château of, 135, 293  
 Calvimont, Jean de, 120, 129, 133, 146, 147

- Capello, Polo, quoted, 162, 198, 199  
 Carré, Michel, 76  
 Cassoni, 156, 157, 256  
 Casteljaloux, 24, 27, 38, 40, 41, 44, 45, 148, 306  
 Chalopin, Catherine, 255  
 —, Robert, 254  
 Chantenay, Philippe de, page to Anne de Bretagne, 95  
 Charles VIII. of France, 48, 60, 85  
 Charlotte of Aragon, Princess de Tarente, afterwards Dame de Laval, 85, 86, 89, 93, 120, 125 *seq.*, 128, 131, 133, 154, 162, 183, 187, 191  
 Châteaubriant, Château of, 47, 53, 55, 56  
 —, Madame de, Françoise de Dinan, 46, 47, 48, 53 *seq.*, 56  
 Chimay, Charles de Croy, Prince de, 25, 59  
 —, Louise d'Albret, Princess de, 25, 59, 92, 137  
 Chinchilla, 269, 281  
 Chinon, 8, 113-115, 118, 121, 125, 180  
 Claustre, Martin,  
 Condom, Abbey of, 25  
 Contract, marriage, of Charlotte d'Albret, 139-148  
 —, —, of Louise de Valentinois, Appendix III.  
 Coppain, Sebastian, 301  
 Cordova, Gonsalvo de, 189, 234  
 Costumes of the Sire d'Albret, 31  
 — of Anne de Bretagne, 61, 76, 77  
 — of Cesare Borgia, 71, 98, 99, 118, 119, 180  
 — of Charlotte d'Albret, 150, 223, 252, 255, 296, 297  
 — of Françoise d'Albret, 31-35  
 Crespines, 207  
 Crown, Double, of Aragon, 183 *seq.*  
 Culant, family of, 229 *seq.*  
 Dalluies, Catherine, waiting-woman to Louise Borgia, 255, 256, 312  
 Diois, the county of, 96, 140, 141, 174, 263  
 Dispastillo, Aliénor de, 74, 75  
 —, Loppe de, 75-76  
 Dizaines, 248  
 Djem, 71, 99  
 Dorsanne, Maître Jacques, 150, 222, 228, 235, 240, 245, 255, 259-260, 264, 265, 266, 297, 308, 311, 315  
 Drageoirs, 15, 203, 212, 239  
 Dress-lengths, 35, 252  
 Estouteville, Jacques d', 30, 39, 135  
 Étampea, Château d', 95  
 —, town of, 94 *seq.*  
 Falcons, the Sire d'Albret's, 29, 30, 31  
 —, Amanieu d'Albret's, 135  
 Federigo of Aragon, King of Naples, 85-89, 122, 128, 131, 183, 188-190  
 Furniture of Alexander VI., 65  
 — of the Château of Blois, 206, 209, 210, 211  
 — of the Hôtel d'Albano, 111  
 — at La Motte Feuilly, 241, 242, 256, 259, 260, 261, 297, 309-310  
 Furs, 31-32, 35, 45, 49, 52, 61, 77, 81, 163, 215, 225, 251-252, 283  
 "Galands sans soucy," the, 79, 80  
 Giulia Bella, 197  
 Gorgets, 245  
 Gregorovius, quoted, 192, 193  
 Guillaume de Blois, 20, 21, 320  
 Inventory of Charlotte d'Albret, Duchesse de Valentinois, 7, 36, 109, 114, 150, 151, 156, 157, 158, 179, 203, 210, 222, 224, 237, 240, 245, 246, 248, 251, 264,  
 Isabeau, Madame de Bretagne, 45, 57-58  
 — de la Tour, 21, 22, 44, 320  
 Issoudun, 8, 94, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 200, 219, 220, 221, 252, 273, 283, 287, 288, 302  
 Jacquot, Geoffroy, goldsmith, of Blois, 265  
 Jeanne, Archduchess of Austria, 205, 207-212  
 —, Sainte, de France, 8, 73, 90, 93, 94, 100, 113, 114, 155, 171, 229, 270, 271, 272, 273-274, 275, 276-279, 292, 295, 300, 301, 302, 305  
 — de Masle, 81  
 — de Dailon, 80  
 Jewels, Cesare Borgia's, 98, 119  
 —, Charlotte d'Albret's, 151, 156, 244-245  
 —, Madame d'Albret's, 35-36

Labrit, 17

La Châtre, 170, 264

La Motte Feuilly, the Château of, its successive ownership, 226 *seq.*; described by M. Edmond Planchut, 227 *seq.*; the stocks at, 228; its environs, *ibid.*; the ancient yew, 229; litigation with regard to the property, *ibid.*; the Duchesse de Valentinois enters into negotiations for its purchase from the de Culante, 229-230; the purchase papers signed, 234-235; difficulties with regard to the transfer of the property to its new owner, 235; the Duchesse de Valentinois confirmed in possession of the Château, 236; the Château as dower-house, 237; its great hall and furnishing, 239; the tapestries at, 239-240; the Duchess's bedroom at, 241; a "sorrowful retreat," 253; the household at, 254 *seq.*; the gentlemen's refectory at, 256; the "alms-chest" at, 257; the kitchen, 259; the bakehouse, 260; the pantry and cellar, *ibid.*; the chapel and its ornaments, 261-262; scene of the death of the Duchesse de Valentinois, 300; wills her heart to the church of, 302; Louise Borgia's room at, 309; letter of Louise Borgia from, 315-316; tomb of Charlotte d'Albret at, 328 *seq.*; its artist, 328-9; its fate, 331, its restoration, 333; as it is today, 334

Landes, 17, 53, 167

Langeais, 49, 52, 95

Laval, Comtesse de, 46, 47, 48, 53, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59

—, Guy de, 54-55

—, Nicolas de, 93, 122, 187

Lavigne, André de,

Loredan, Messire Antonio, quoted, 136

Louargan, Yvonnnet, 255

Louis XII., King of France, 49, 60, 71-74, 84, 91, 92, 93-96, 98, 100, 103, 116, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 125, 126, 127, 128-130, 133, 134, 139, 140-145, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 159, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 169, 171, 173, 174, 175, 176, 180, 188, 189, 190, 198, 199,

205-207, 209, 210, 211, 218, 219, 271, 275, 276, 281, 282, 283, 284, 287, 288, 289, 306, 314, 315

Louise d'Albret, Princesse de Chimay, *see* Chimay

— d'Angoulême, 120, 174-175, 209, 211, 312-317, 319, 320

— Borgia, de Valentinois, 200, 209, 219, 229, 255, 269, 281, 297, 305, 308-320

— de Juge, 39

Luchaire, M. Achille, quoted, 19, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29-31

Maillard, Benoit, Prior of Savigny, monastic meteorologist, 113

Malo, Henri, 259

Manicord, 79

Mathe, Etienne, dispenser to Sainte Jeanne de Valois, 273

Maulde de la Clavière, M., quoted, 84 note, 275, 302

Mila, Adriana de, 135, 197

Minstrels of Anne de Bretagne, 79

Montils-sur-Blois, 271

Montrichard, 271

Moralities, 79, 97, 98

Morris-dancers, 30, 102, 109, 112

Mystery-plays at Nantes in honour of Anne de Bretagne, 98

— at Avignon in honour of Cesare Borgia, 104, 107

Navarre, Nantes, 45, 47, 48, 57, 84, 94, 97, 125, 126, 133

—, Catherine de, 59

—, Henri de, 17, 240

—, Jean de, 25, 59, 281, 282, 291

Nérac, 24, 25, 27, 28, 30, 31, 38, 39, 40, 41, 52, 57, 58, 59, 130, 131, 137, 301

"Oiselets de Chypre," 246-247

Order of the Annonciades, 274, 277-279

— of the Cordelière, 81, 82

— of St. Michael, 28, 162-164

Orval, Amanien, Sire d', 25

—, Anne d', 257

—, M. d', 225, 265

Osanna, the Blessed, prophecy of state of Cesare Borgia, 230

Pampeluna, 59, 68, 281, 283, 287, 289

Paternosters, 247-248

Paul, Master, lute-player to Anne de Bretagne, 79

Pax, 261

- Pélassier, M., quoted, 200-201  
 Perfumes, 246-247  
 Perreal, painter, 84  
 Petit-Jean, furrier, 251  
 —, tambourine-player, 80  
 —, shoemaker, 112  
 Plaisance, pursuivant to Anne de Bretagne, 95  
 Planchut, M. Edmond, quoted, 8, 227, 229, 238  
 Pomanders, 246-247  
 Porche, Jehanne, nurse to Anne de Bretagne, 41  
 Prayer-book of Anne de Bretagne, 61, 82  
 — of Madame d'Albret, 251  
 Proisy, Jean de, 56  
  
 Rebec, 118, 179  
 Regnard, Catherine de, Madame de Toutvent, 255, 312, 317  
 Reliquaries, 36, 251  
 Rennes, 47, 48, 49, 52, 97  
 Requesenz, 282-284, 287  
 Rieux, Maréchal de, 46, 48, 56  
 Rohan, Catherine de, 46, 53  
 Romagière, Simon de la, 90, 91, 120, 129, 130, 253  
 Romorantin, the Château of, 8, 166, 174, 175, 176, 179, 313  
 Rose, the Golden, 180-182  
 Rovere, Giuliano della, afterwards Pope Julius II., 65, 101, 103, 121, 125, 280, 288, 310  
  
 Sforza, Anna, of Este, 62  
 —, Ascanio, Cardinal, 65, 276  
 Sinigaglia, 269  
 Sword of Cesare Borgia, 185  
  
 Tabellion, 139, 146, 149  
 Tapestry at Blois, 206, 209, 210  
 — of Felletin, 239, 240  
 — at La Motte Feuilly, 239, 241, 254, 297  
 — of Normandy, 240  
 Tour Blanche, the, of Issoudun, 172, 173, 200, 220, 221  
 Touret, the, 243, 244  
 Toutvent, Madame de, 255, 312, 317  
 Trémouille, Louis II., de la, 53, 190, 320  
 Trinkets, 36, 244, 245  
  
 Van de Put, Mr. Albert, quoted, 183 *seq.*  
 Vanozza of the Vineyard (Cata neis), 10, 42, 67, 89, 132  
 Venetian necklace, 36  
 — needlework, 258-259  
 — sweetmeats, 202-203  
  
 Will of Catherine d'Albret, 301 *seq.* and Appendix II.  
  
 Yriarte, M., quoted, 58, 59, 154, 185, 216, 293



[illegible]

**CIRCULATE**



A0000006966607

92 ✓  
VR35m

406900

Miron

Derelict duchess

**IDEAL BOOK STORE**  
Good Books  
Bought and Sold  
1246 Amsterdam Ave.  
NEW YORK

[illegible]

**CIRCULATE**

92 ✓  
VR35m

406900

Miron

Derelict duchess



A0000006966607

**IDEAL BOOK STORE**

*Good Books  
Bought and Sold*  
**1246 Amsterdam Ave.  
NEW YORK**



A0000006966607





A000006966607

Digitized by Google